DANBI

1 cat

4

Kim MiKyung

AFTER MEETING NOMI'S BROTHER RIKA LEAVES NOMI BEHIND WITH HIM AND RETURNS BACK HOME WITH HER UNCLE. MEANWHILE THE SECRET SCHEME OF THE SWORD MASTER OF BLACK IRON IS REVEALED. TO REVIVE ARTHUR, HIS BEST FRIEND AND RIKA'S FATHER, AT THE PRICE OF RIKA'S LIFE!! THE FINAL VOLUME OF THE CUTEST ADVENTURE EVER IS NOW HERE!!

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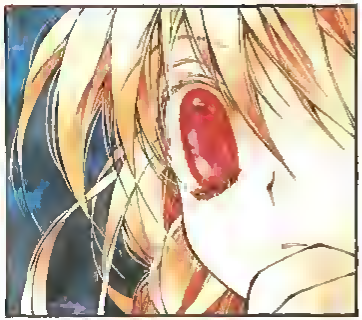
리카!!! 고양이면 집에서 키워야지!!
RIKA!!! YOU ALREADY HAVE A CAT! DON'T YOU REMEMBER SIERRA?! AND THAT MILK WILL MAKE HIM SICK!
WHAT?! I'M THE INGENUE!!!
CAN I HAVE SOME OF YOUR FOOD, SIERRA?
HOW ABOUT A BATH, KITTY?
YOU'LL FEEL BETTER AFTER SOAKING IN THE TUB
YOU NEED TO LET THE POOR CREATURE REST! THE BATH CAN WAIT A FEW DAYS.
SOB
SOB
WHAT KIND OF PERSON ABANDONS SUCH AN ADORABLE CAT?
I BET SOMEONE JUST--
EXCUSE ME... HAVE YOU SEEN MY CAT?
AH...!!

IT MAKES ME HAPPY TO KNOW HE WASN'T ABANDONED... SO VERY HAPPY. BUT WHY DO I ALSO FEEL SO EMPTY? I GUESS I SECRETLY HOPED NO ONE WOULD COME FOR HIM.



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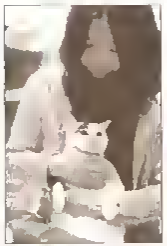
11th CAT

vol.4

Kim MiKyung

ice Kunlon

Words from the Creator



Mi-Kyung Kim

Birthday: February 29th

Sign: Pisces

Bloodtype: O

Q What I liked the most about working on this series...

The feeling I got from doing something every day, which is so much better than wasting my time fooling around (although I did that, too, from time to time) It wasn't all about work, though. I met a lot of people. I've adopted more cats... (I feel like I'm getting off track.)

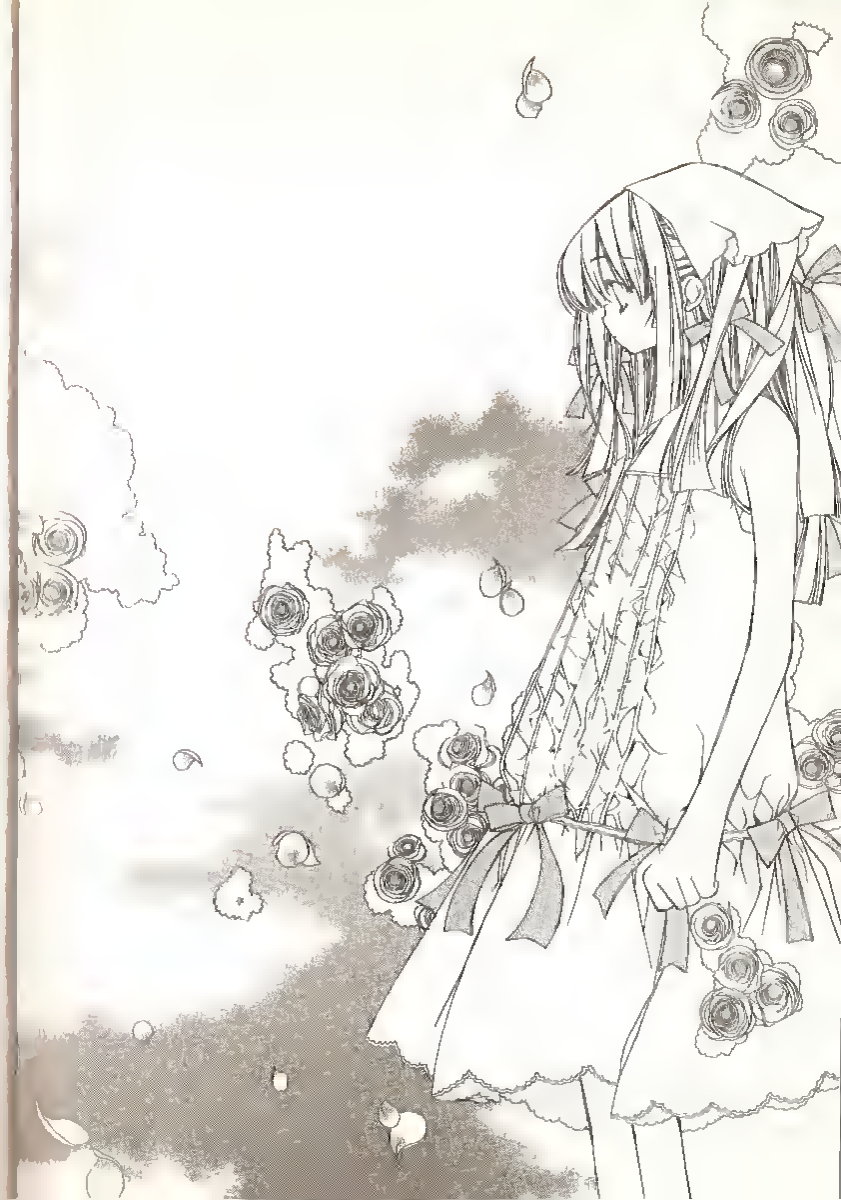
Q What's changed the most between now and when you first started this series...?

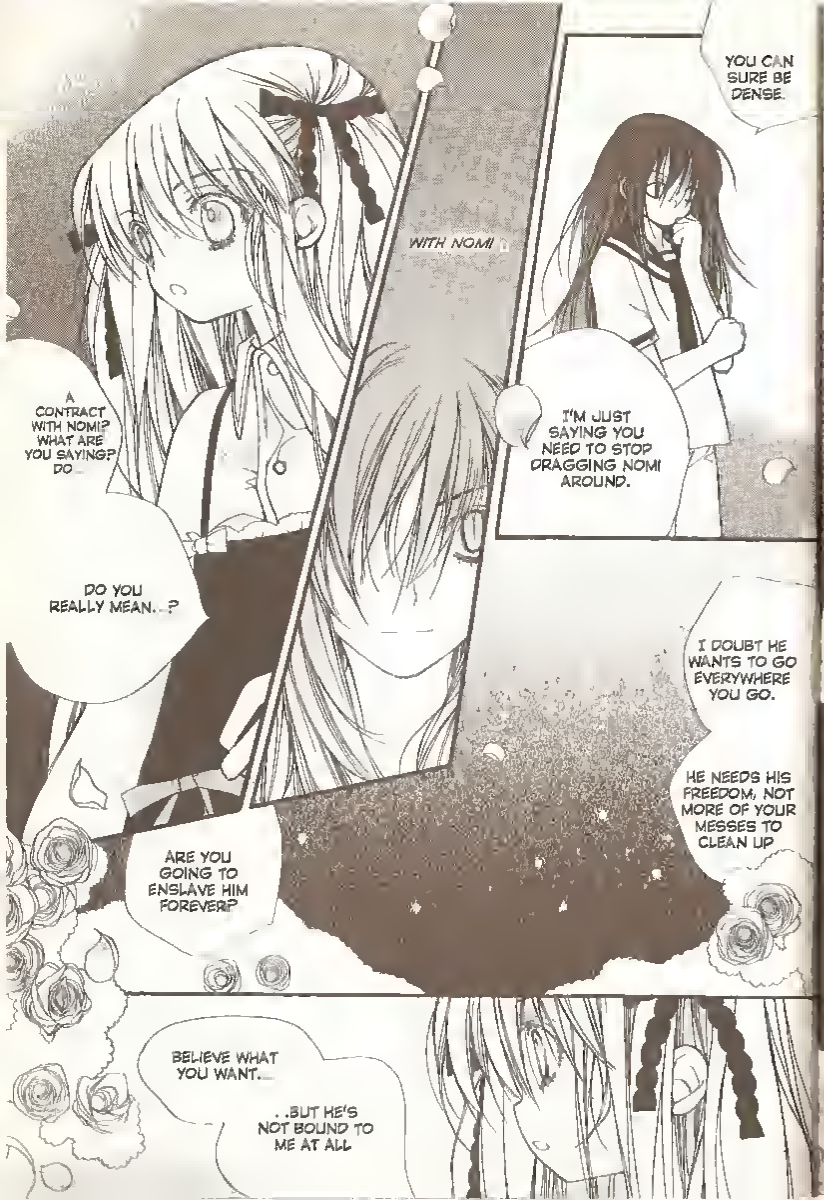
First of all, my drawing style has changed so much!!! (Emphasize, emphasize.) But don't rush to your bookshelf to compare volumes. It's just, don't you think it's better than before? (If not, I'm crushed!)

I'm so glad that I was able to see this series through to its completion. I hope to see all of you again next time with an even better book.

This is the final volume. So many people helped me during the making of this series, I want to thank them all from the bottom of my heart.

I know I had a lot more to say in this section in the first three volumes, but this time, the page is almost empty. (Cough)




WITH NOMI
A CONTRACT WITH NOMI? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? DO...
DO YOU REALLY MEAN...?
YOU CAN SURE BE DENSE.
I'M JUST SAYING YOU NEED TO STOP DRAGGING NOMI AROUND.
I DOUBT HE WANTS TO GO EVERYWHERE YOU GO.
HE NEEDS HIS FREEDOM, NOT MORE OF YOUR MESSES TO CLEAN UP.
ARE YOU GOING TO ENSLAVE HIM FOREVER?
BELIEVE WHAT YOU WANT...
...BUT HE'S NOT BOUND TO ME AT ALL.

REALLY? IS THAT WHAT NOMI THINKS? WHY DON'T YOU TELL HER, NOMI...?
TELL HER WHY YOU'VE STUCK AROUND.
I...
I'M REQUIRED TO STAY WITH YOU.

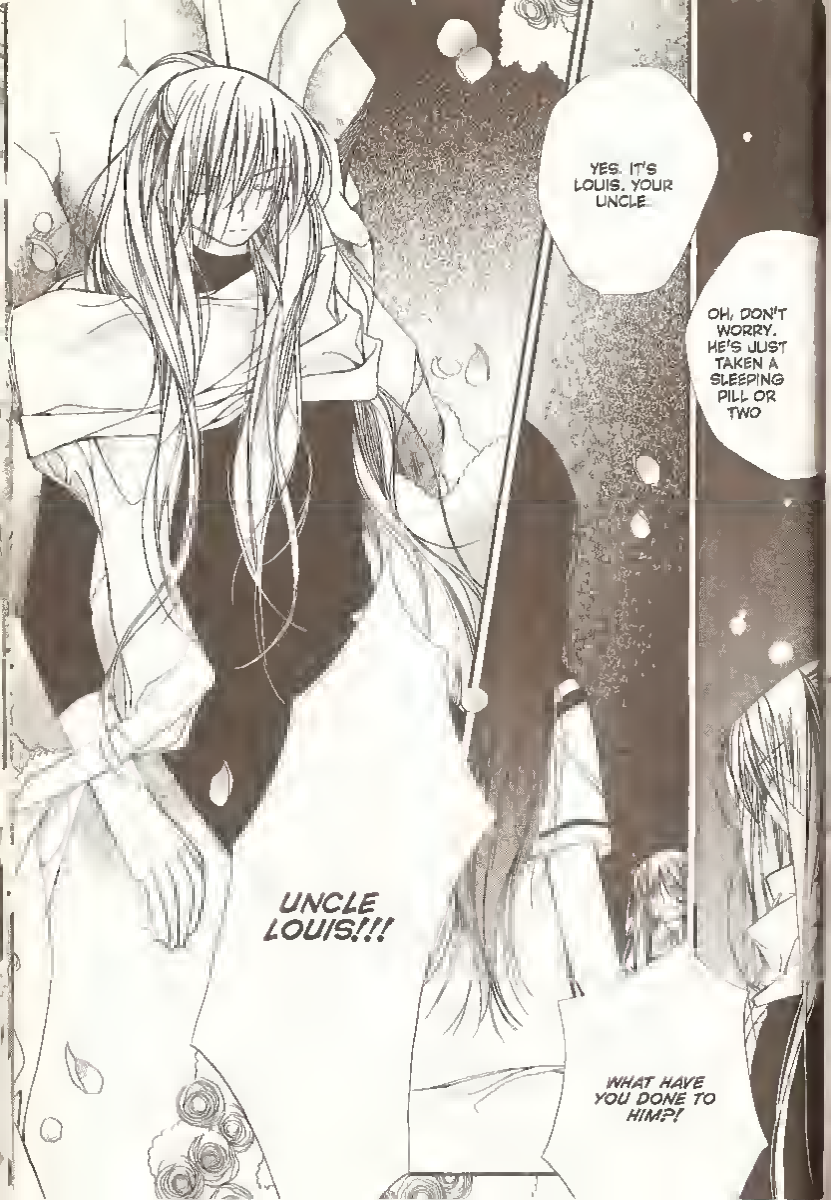
PLEASE, RELEASE ME FROM OUR CONTRACT, RIKA
I KNOW YOU DIDN'T WANT IT AT FIRST...
...BUT THEN YOU SAID WE WERE LIKE FAMILY, AND I WAS RELIEVED...
SO, WHY... WHY NOW?
THIS IS SO WEIRD...
NOMI, IS THAT WHAT YOU REALLY WANT?
I'M NOT SAYING I DON'T BELONG HERE...BUT AS LONG AS IT'S AN OFFICIAL AGREEMENT, I CAN'T BE FREE...
NOMI...

YES
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU REALLY WANT, THEN LOOK ME IN THE EYE AND TELL ME. NOMI, WHY DID WE COME HERE?
DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS? IS THAT WHY YOU WERE ACTING SO FUNNY?
SOME THINGS ARE IMPOSSIBLE TO EXPRESS...
RIKA, I...
I CAN'T PART WITH NOMI! NEVER!
RIKA, ARE YOU REFUSING TO RELEASE HIM?

WHO ARE YOU TO TELL US WHAT TO DO?! YOU DON'T CARE WHAT NOMI WANTS!
OH, RIKA ..
I CAN'T SAY I EXPECTED YOU TO GIVE UP EASILY
YOU'D BETTER GIVE UP NOW BEFORE YOU GET HURT.
STUBBORN-NESS IS THE CURRENCY OF REGRET.
SO, I HAVE SOMETHING THAT MIGHT PERSUADE YOU
NOMI, YOU STAY HERE.
WHY CAN'T I GO WITH YOU GUYS?
ISN'T IT OBVIOUS? BECAUSE I DON'T WANT YOU TO SEE THIS!
COME ON, RIKA
I DOUBT YOU'LL REMAIN SO ADAMANT ABOUT GETTING YOUR WAY AFTER I SHOW YOU

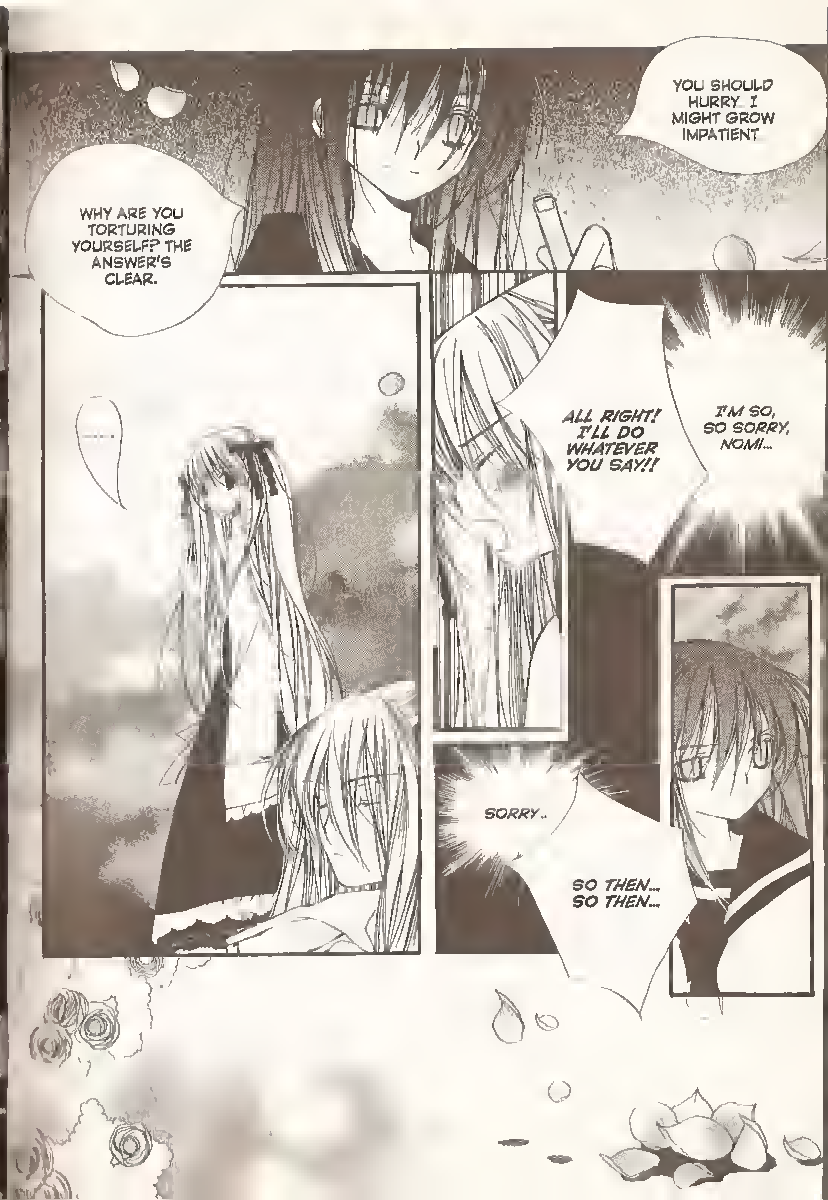
HOW MUCH FURTHER IS IT? WE'VE BEEN WALKING FOR A WHILE
TELL ME, WHY WON'T YOU LET NOMI GO FREE?
WHAT DO YOU THINK A LIFE WITH YOU HOLDS FOR HIM?
CLEARLY, SOMETHING BETTER THAN WHAT YOU OFFER. NOMI DREADED COMING HERE.
REALLY? IS THAT WHAT HE TOLD YOU?
THAT...THAT'S
HOW DO I SEE NOMI?
A FRIEND?
IF NOT...
IF NOT, THEN WHAT?
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU KNOW EVERYTHING?!
IF YOU CARED ABOUT HIM AS MUCH AS I DO, YOU'D LET HIM LEAVE.
WHAT DO YOU EVEN SEE HIM AS?
I...

DO YOU EVEN KNOW NOMI? I BET YOU DON'T KNOW THE FIRST THING...!!
YOU'RE RIGHT..
I KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT NOMI.
BUT I DO KNOW THAT HE DIDN'T WANT TO COME HERE. I HAVE NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT.
I WOULDN T FORCE HIM TO GO WHERE HE DOESN T WANT TO GO.
YOU'LL CHANGE YOUR MIND. TAKE A LOOK BEHIND YOU.
WHAT..?
THAT... THAT'S...!!!

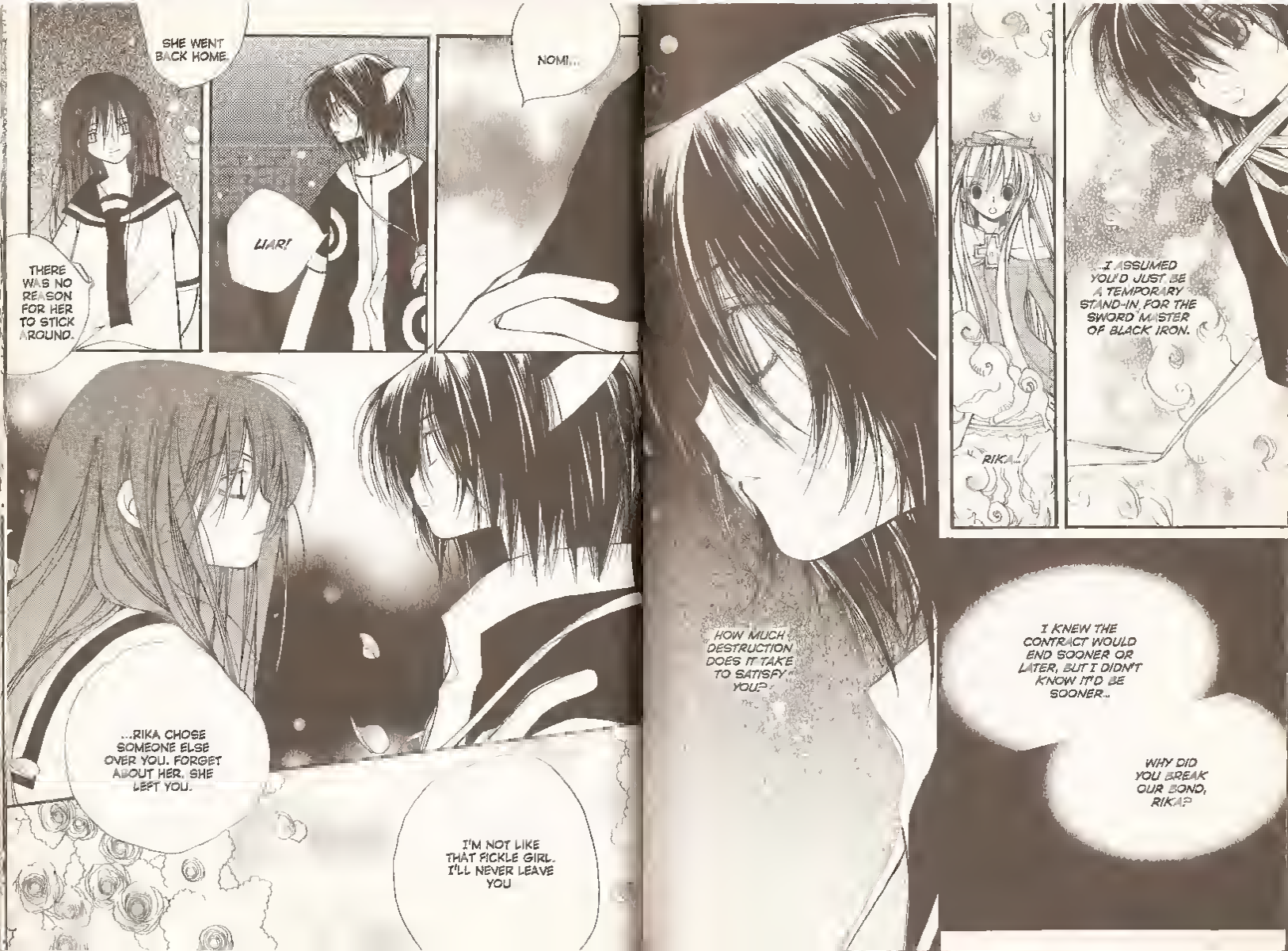

YES. IT'S LOUIS. YOUR UNCLE.
OH, DON'T WORRY. HE'S JUST TAKEN A SLEEPING PILL OR TWO
UNCLE LOUIS!!!
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HIM?!

EXCEPT THEY WEREN'T EXACTLY DOCTOR PRESCRIBED
THEY REQUIRE THIS ANTIDOTE.
HOW DID UNCLE GET HERE?
ARE YOU SAYING YOU'LL TRADE THAT ANTIDOTE FOR NOMI?
OBVIOUSLY.
IT'S NOT A DIFFICULT CHOICE NOMI OR YOUR UNCLE.
YOU WOULDN'T TURN YOUR BACK ON YOUR FAMILY, WOULD YOU?

LOUIS OR NOMI...
HOW CAN I POSSIBLY CHOOSE BETWEEN THE TWO?
NOMI'S BEEN TRAVELING WITH ME FOR A LONG TIME, AND HE'S ALWAYS HELPED ME OUT.
NOW, I'M ALL ALONE... AND NEED TO MAKE A CHOICE... BUT...BUT...
NOMI!!!

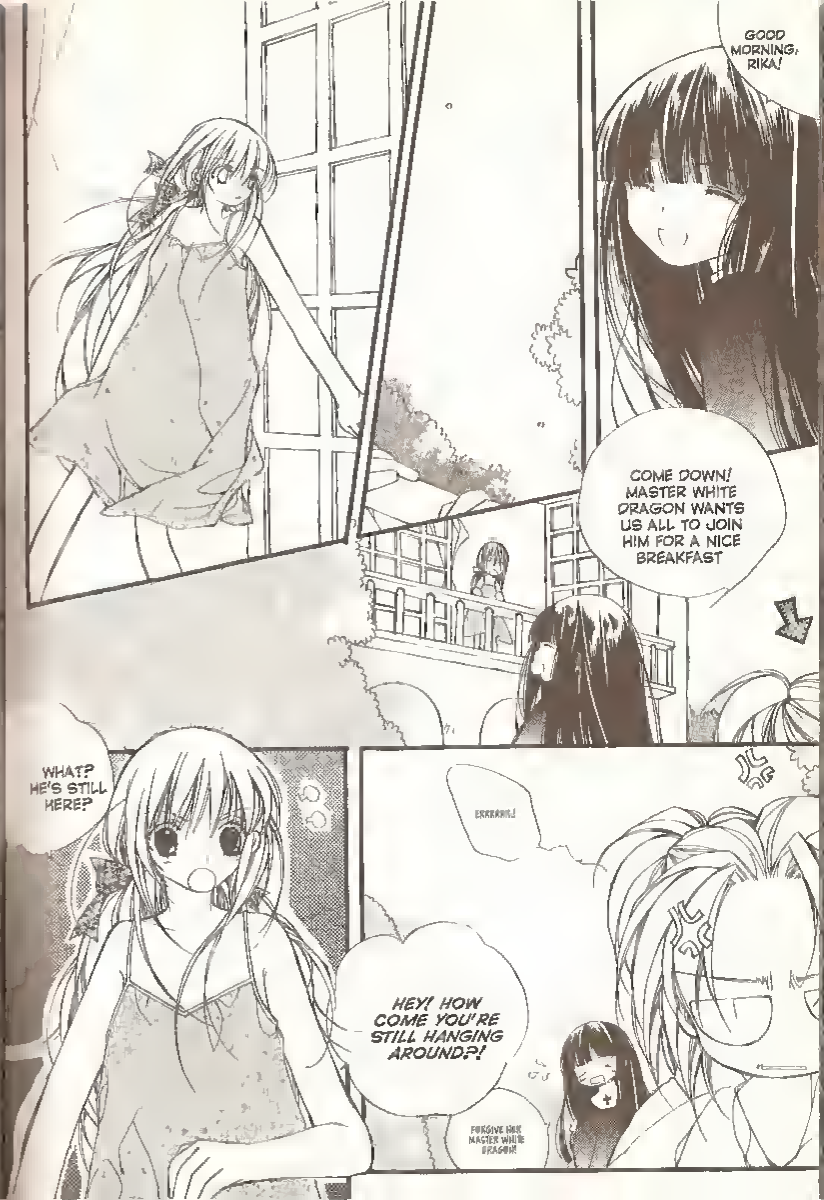

YOU SHOULD HURRY. I MIGHT GROW IMPATIENT.
WHY ARE YOU TORTURING YOURSELF? THE ANSWER'S CLEAR.
...
ALL RIGHT! I'LL DO WHATEVER YOU SAY!!
I'M SO, SO SORRY, NOMI...
SORRY..
SO THEN... SO THEN...

WHAT'S WRONG, NOMI?
THE CONTRACT ...
..IS NOW VOID..
HOORAY-♥ ISN'T THAT GREAT NEWS, NOMI?!
SHUT UP!!!
IN THE END.. NO MATTER WHAT..YOU GET YOUR WAY, YOU BRUTE!
WHAT DID I DO?
NOMI...
WHERE'S RIKA?
ALL OF THIS WAS FOR YOU.
DON'T YOU SEE?

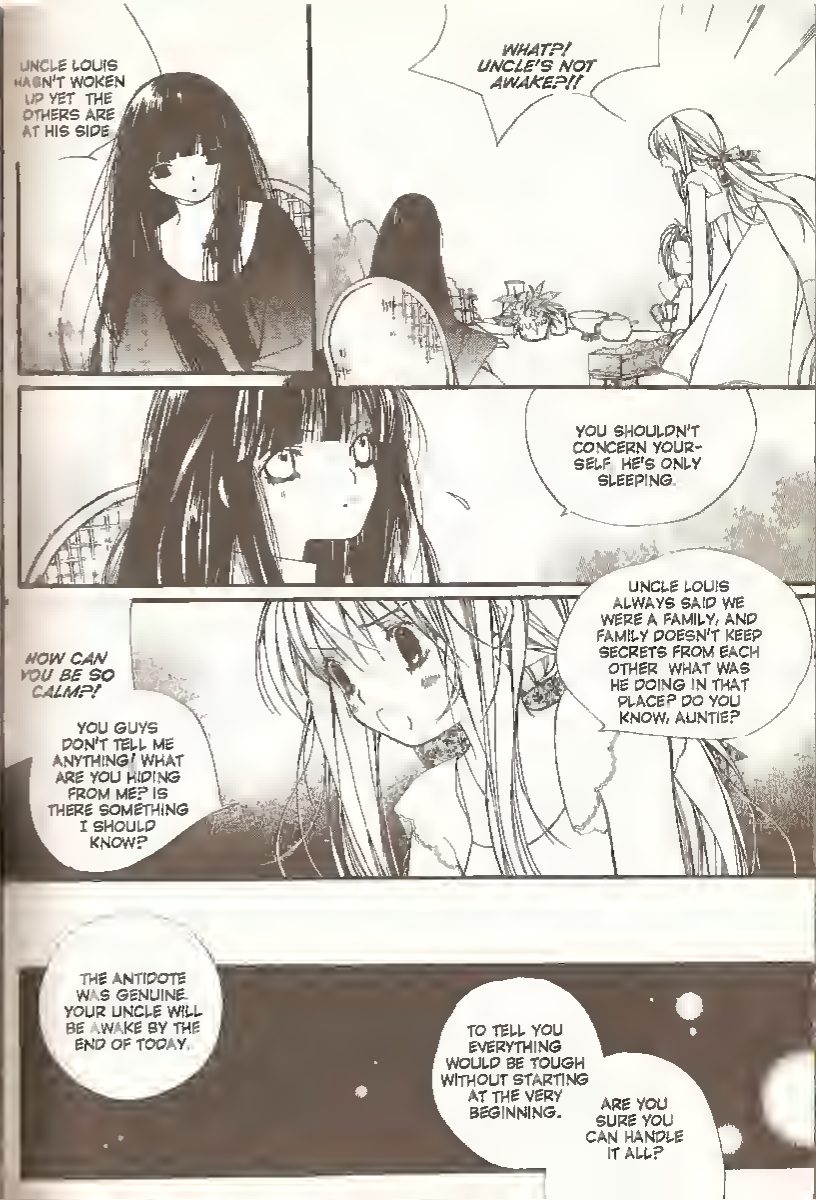

SHE WENT BACK HOME.
THERE WAS NO REASON FOR HER TO STICK AROUND.
LIAR!
NOMI...
...RIKA CHOSE SOMEONE ELSE OVER YOU. FORGET ABOUT HER. SHE LEFT YOU.
I'M NOT LIKE THAT FICKLE GIRL. I'LL NEVER LEAVE YOU
"HOW MUCH DESTRUCTION DOES IT TAKE TO SATISFY YOU?"
RIKA...
...I ASSUMED YOU'D JUST BE A TEMPORARY STAND-IN FOR THE SWORD MASTER OF BLACK IRON.
I KNEW THE CONTRACT WOULD END SOONER OR LATER, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW IT'D BE SOONER...
WHY DID YOU BREAK OUR BOND, RIKA?

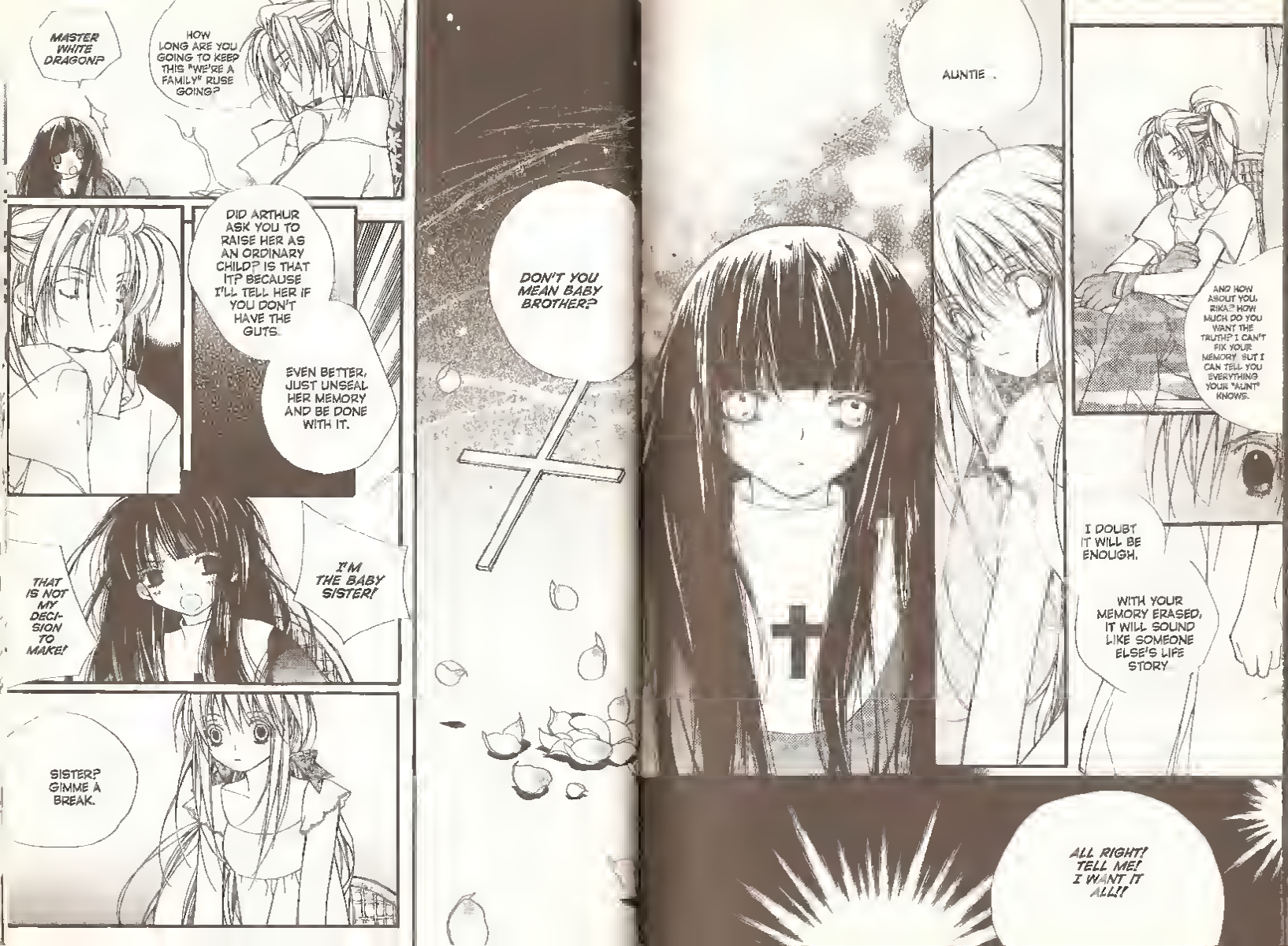
HAVE YOU REALLY ABANDONED ME?

MORNING ALREADY?
I ALMOST FORGOT...I'M HOME AGAIN
I WANTED TO SAY SOMETHING TO NOMI BEFORE I LEFT, BUT...!
THAT FRIEND OF NOMI'S...THE INSTANT I AGREED, HE BLASTED MYSELF, UNCLE LOUIS, AND THE WHITE DRAGON BACK HERE
RIKA, ARE YOU UP?

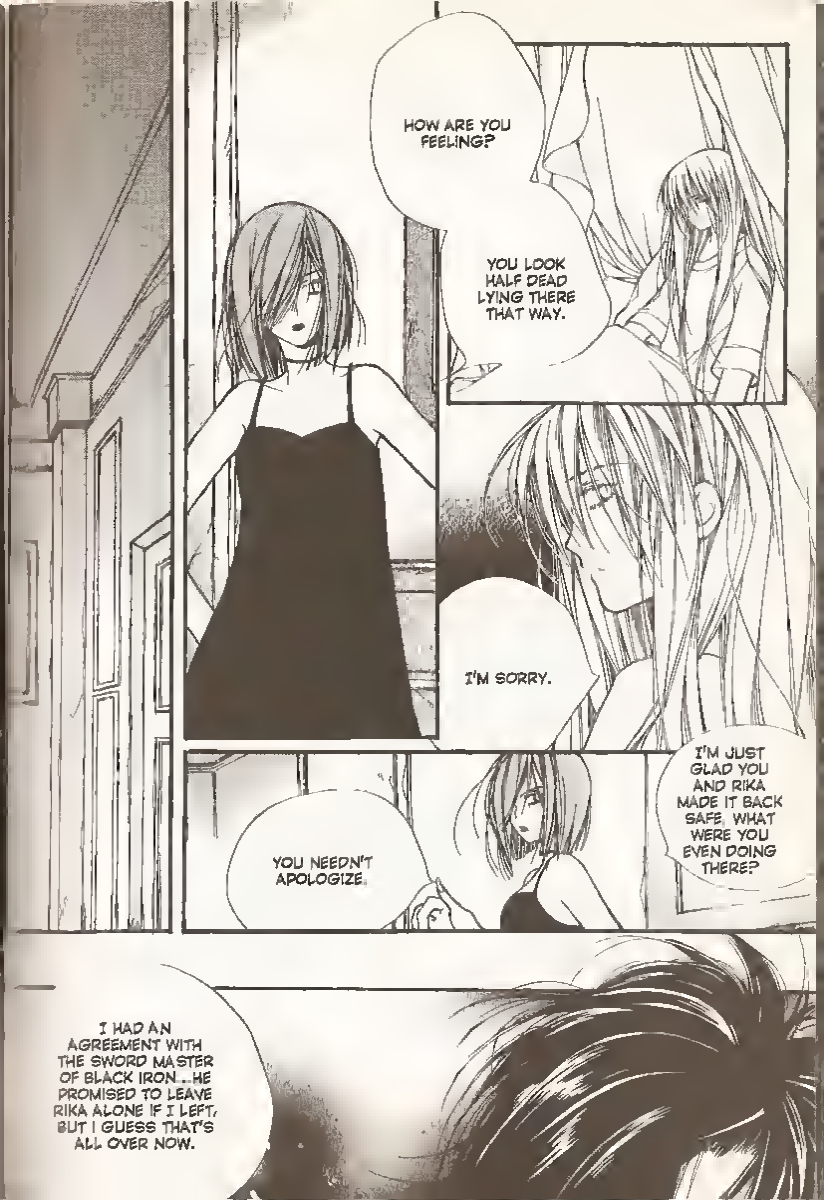

GOOD MORNING, RIKA!
COME DOWN! MASTER WHITE DRAGON WANTS US ALL TO JOIN HIM FOR A NICE BREAKFAST
WHAT? HE'S STILL HERE?
ERRRRR!!
HEY! HOW COME YOU'RE STILL HANGING AROUND?!
FORGIVE HER MASTER WHITE DRAGON!

BEFORE YOU GET ALL HIGH 'N' MIGHTY ..YOU MIGHT WANNA CHANGE OUT OF YOUR SEE-THROUGH PAJAMAS
OH!!
THUD!
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?! YOU PERVERT!
YOU COULDN'T PAY ME TO LOOK AT YOU
M-MIKA..
BY THE WAY...
WHERE ARE UNCLE LOUIS AND THE OTHER AUNTS? HOW COME IT'S JUST US THREE?


UNCLE LOUIS HASN'T WOKEN UP YET THE OTHERS ARE AT HIS SIDE
WHAT?! UNCLE'S NOT AWAKE?!!
YOU SHOULDN'T CONCERN YOURSELF HE'S ONLY SLEEPING.
UNCLE LOUIS ALWAYS SAID WE WERE A FAMILY, AND FAMILY DOESN'T KEEP SECRETS FROM EACH OTHER WHAT WAS HE DOING IN THAT PLACE? DO YOU KNOW, AUNTIE?
HOW CAN YOU BE SO CALM?!
YOU GUYS DON'T TELL ME ANYTHING! WHAT ARE YOU HIDING FROM ME? IS THERE SOMETHING I SHOULD KNOW?
THE ANTIDOTE WAS GENUINE. YOUR UNCLE WILL BE AWAKE BY THE END OF TODAY.
TO TELL YOU EVERYTHING WOULD BE TOUGH WITHOUT STARTING AT THE VERY BEGINNING.
ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN HANDLE IT ALL?

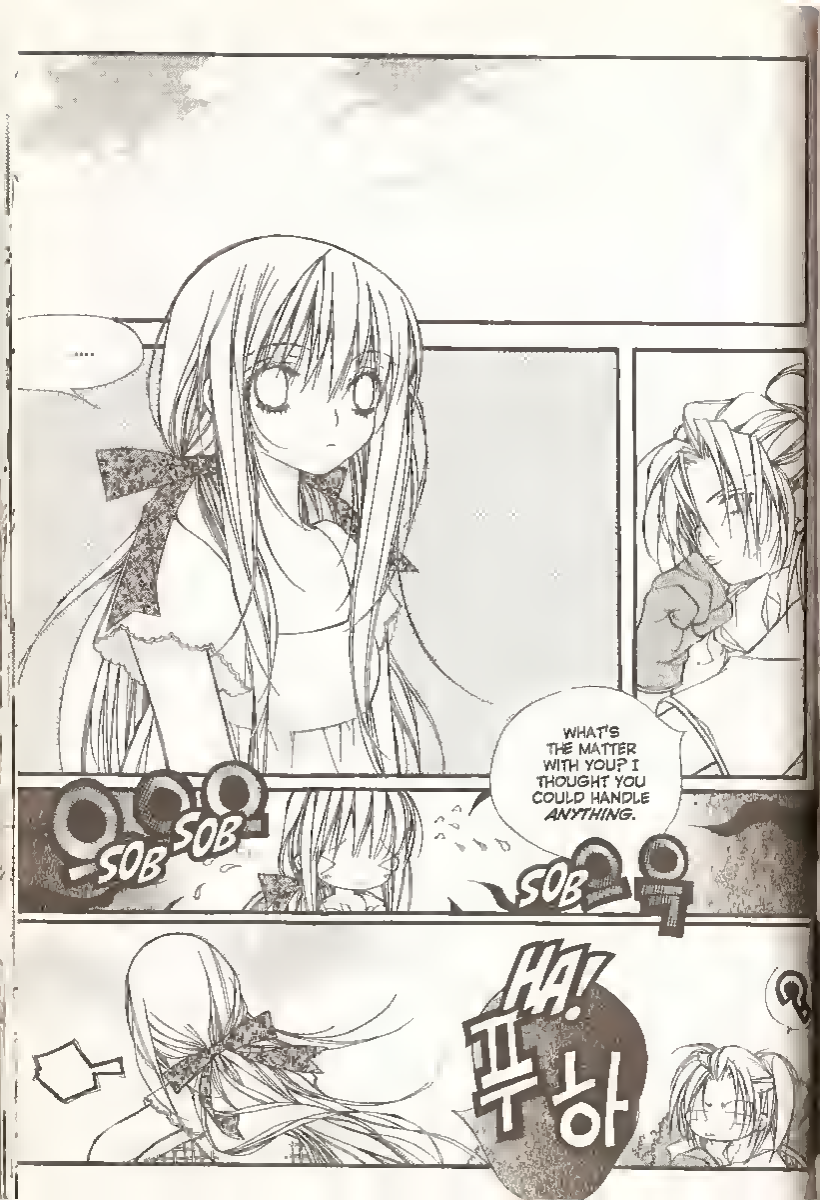

MASTER WHITE DRAGON?
HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO KEEP THIS "WE'RE A FAMILY" RUSE GOING?
DID ARTHUR ASK YOU TO RAISE HER AS AN ORDINARY CHILD? IS THAT IT? BECAUSE I'LL TELL HER IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE GUTS.
EVEN BETTER, JUST UNSEAL HER MEMORY AND BE DONE WITH IT.
THAT IS NOT MY DECISION TO MAKE!
I'M THE BABY SISTER!
SISTER? GIMME A BREAK.
DON'T YOU MEAN BABY BROTHER?
AUNTIE .
AND HOW ABOUT YOU, RIKA? HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT THE TRUTH? I CAN'T FIX YOUR MEMORY, BUT I CAN TELL YOU EVERYTHING YOUR "AUNT" KNOWS.
I DOUBT IT WILL BE ENOUGH.
WITH YOUR MEMORY ERASED, IT WILL SOUND LIKE SOMEONE ELSE'S LIFE STORY.
ALL RIGHT! TELL ME! I WANT IT ALL!!

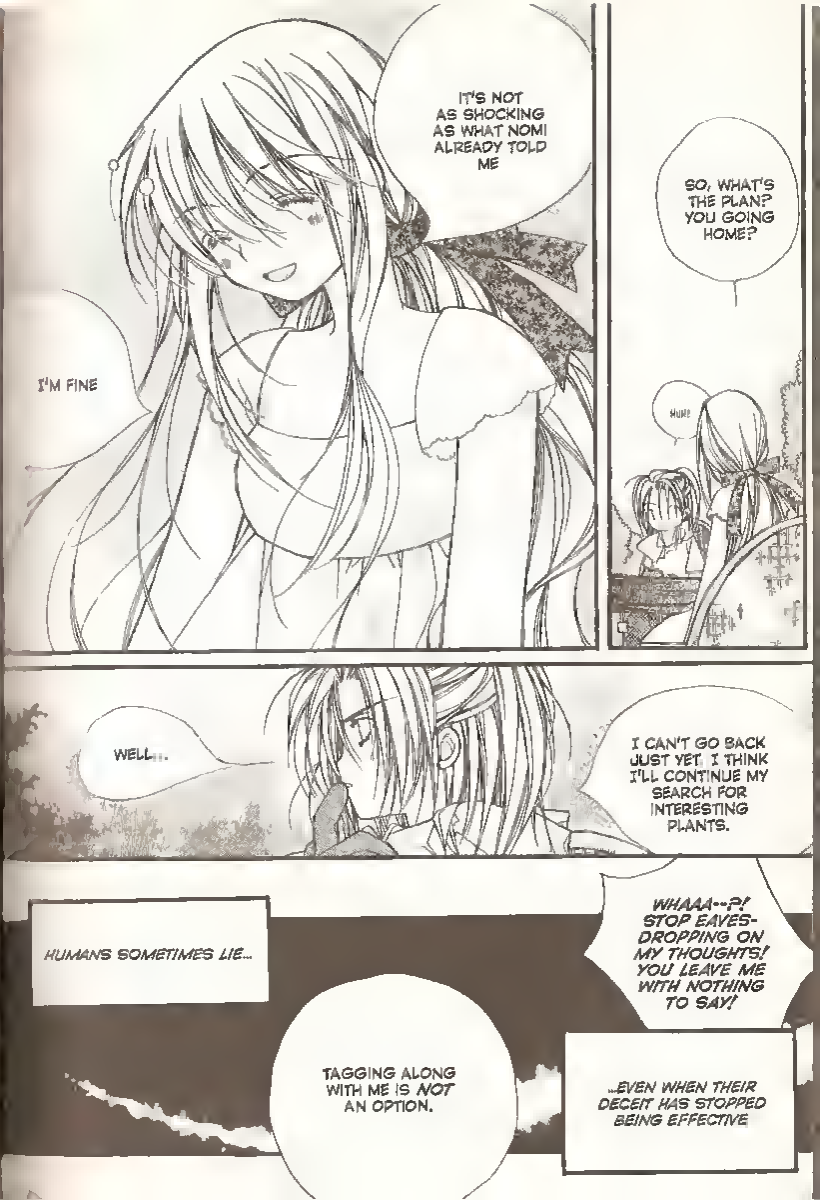
RIKA, WE'LL TELL YOU WHEN IT'S RIGHT--
AND WHEN IS THAT?!
I WANT TO BE STRONG.
I'LL BE FINE. I CAN TAKE ANYTHING
IT'S OKAY, AUNTIE I'M NOT A LITTLE KID ANYMORE.
I WANT OUT OF THE DARK.
I DON'T WANT TO BE HELPLESS.


HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
YOU LOOK HALF DEAD LYING THERE THAT WAY.
I'M SORRY.
YOU NEEDN'T APOLOGIZE.
I'M JUST GLAD YOU AND RIKA MADE IT BACK SAFE. WHAT WERE YOU EVEN DOING THERE?
I HAD AN AGREEMENT WITH THE SWORD MASTER OF BLACK IRON...HE PROMISED TO LEAVE RIKA ALONE IF I LEFT. BUT I GUESS THAT'S ALL OVER NOW.

HE PROBABLY KNEW THAT I WOULD FAIL.
I BLAME MYSELF. I SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT THROUGH EVERY POSSIBLE SCENARIO.
BAM!!
SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAS HAPPENED!
WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE KEEPING AN EYE ON THE WHITE DRAGON.
THAT'S JUST IT...THE DRAGON TOLD RIKA EVERY-THING?!
I COULDN'T STOP HIM!

I TOLD YOU TO BE OH GUARD WITH HIM! HE READS MINDS!
BUT HOW COULD I KNOW RIKA'S PAST WOULD COME UP?
WHAT SHOULD I DO...
WHAT NOW... I...
PERHAPS IT'S FOR THE BEST. IT SPARES US HAVING TO TELL HER OURSELVES
SHE'D HAVE FOUND OUT EVENTU-ALLY
RIKA CAN'T REMAIN A CHILD FOREVER.

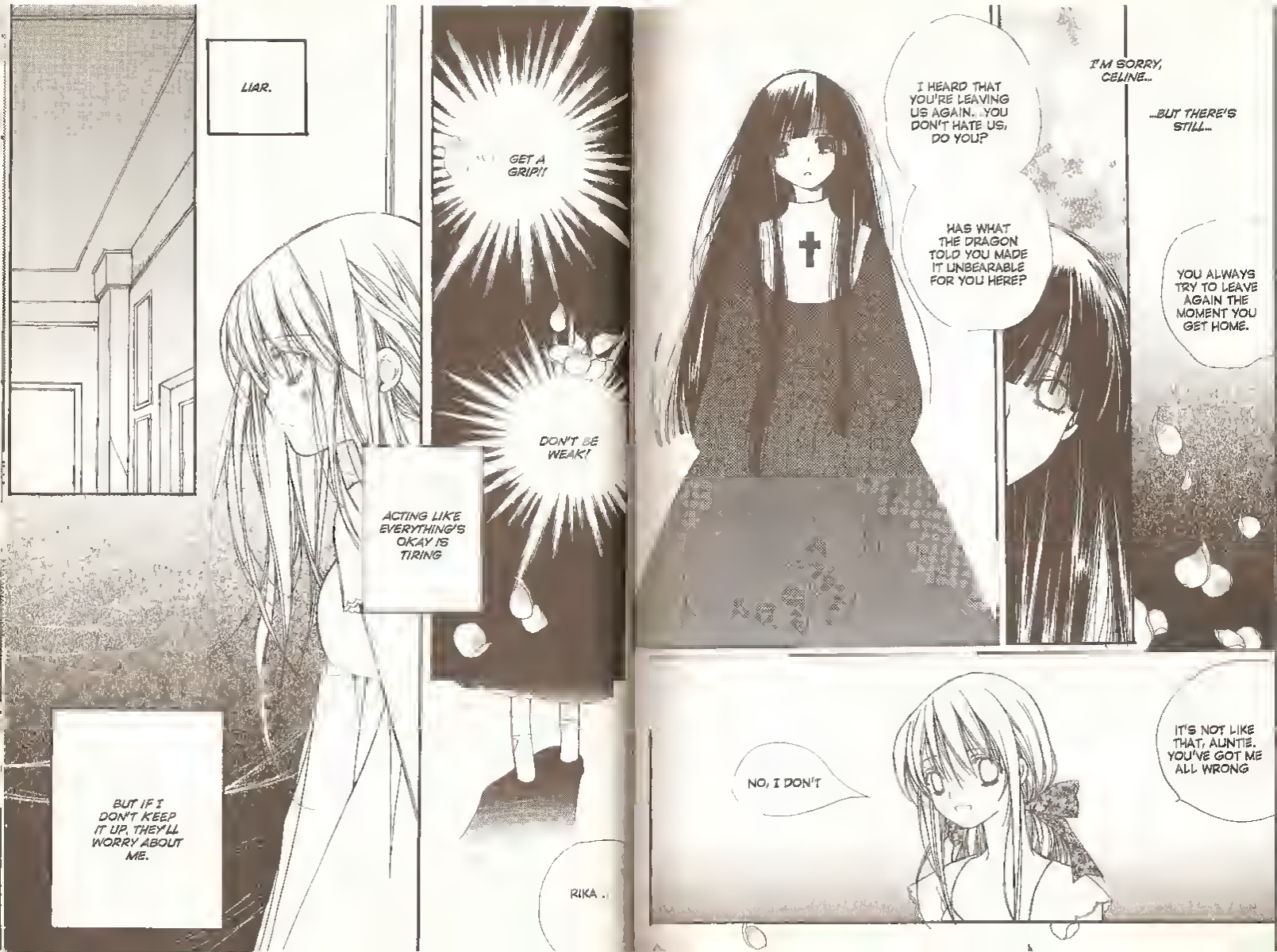

....
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU? I THOUGHT YOU COULD HANDLE ANYTHING.
SOB SOB
SOB
HA!
푸앙

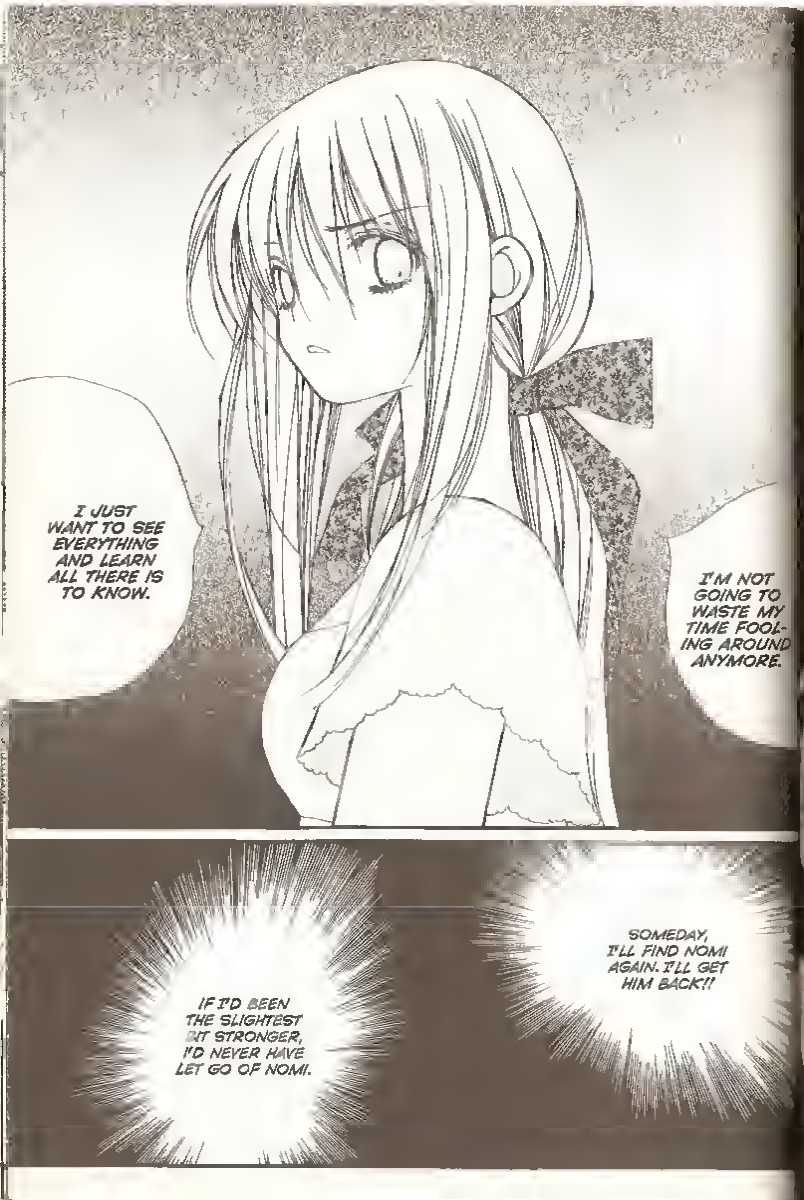

IT'S NOT AS SHOCKING AS WHAT NOMI ALREADY TOLD ME
I'M FINE
SO, WHAT'S THE PLAN? YOU GOING HOME?
NOMI
WELL...
I CAN'T GO BACK JUST YET. I THINK I'LL CONTINUE MY SEARCH FOR INTERESTING PLANTS.
HUMANS SOMETIMES LIE...
WHAAA--?! STOP EAVES-DROPPING ON MY THOUGHTS! YOU LEAVE ME WITH NOTHING TO SAY!
TAGGING ALONG WITH ME IS NOT AN OPTION.
...EVEN WHEN THEIR DECEIT HAS STOPPED BEING EFFECTIVE

THE REVELATION SHOCKED HER, BUT SHE'S MAINTAINING A BRAVE FACE.
WELL... FOR ONCE I WAS GOING TO GET MY AUNTS' PERMISSION TO LEAVE, AND THEY WON'T LET ME GO BY MYSELF
SHE'S PRETENDING TO BE FINE...
IS SHE THAT DESPERATE TO BECOME A GROWN-UP?
AT LEAST ESCORT ME OUT THE GATE! YA BIG MEANIE!
I TOLD YOU I DON'T LIKE YOU GET OFF MY TAIL!
ON TOP OF THAT, SHE STILL HASN'T GIVEN UP ON NOMI. THAT GIRL NEVER LETS ANYTHING GO
I CAN TAKE HER A LITTLE OF THE WAY...
WHAT THE HELL AM I THINKING!?!

WHAT D'YA SAY, HUH? C'MON!
GLITTER
GLITTER
DARN! WHAT DID I GET MYSELF INTO?
OK, THEN I'LL JUST RUN UP AND TELL THE OTHERS WE'LL GO AS SOON AS I'M DONE.
HOORAY!
ALL RIGHT. BUT JUST UNTIL WE'RE THROUGH THE GATE.

IT'S ALL RIGHT IF YOU GO, JUST REMEMBER TO SEND US WORD OF YOUR WHEREABOUTS AT LEAST ONCE EVERY TWO DAYS.
HMMM, THAT'S STRANGE...
IT WAS ALMOST TOO EASY.
BY THE WAY...
RIKA... ARE YOU REALLY OKAY?
ARE YOU TRYING TO LEAVE BECAUSE IT'S BECOME UNCOMFORTABLE TO STAY WITH US?
UNCLE, THE PAST IS NOT IMPORTANT. ALL THAT MATTERS IS RIGHT NOW.
ARTHUR'S BOOK IS NOT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING HE LEFT BEHIND.
RIKI IS MORE IMPORTANT, BY FAR.
I LOVE YOU AND MY AUNTS A LOT. THAT'S ENOUGH FOR ME.
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, UNCLE DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME. I'LL WRITE AS OFTEN AS I CAN.
TAP
SHE'S A NOVICE NOW, BUT SHE HAS THE POTENTIAL TO RIVAL EVEN ARTHUR'S WIZARDRY.

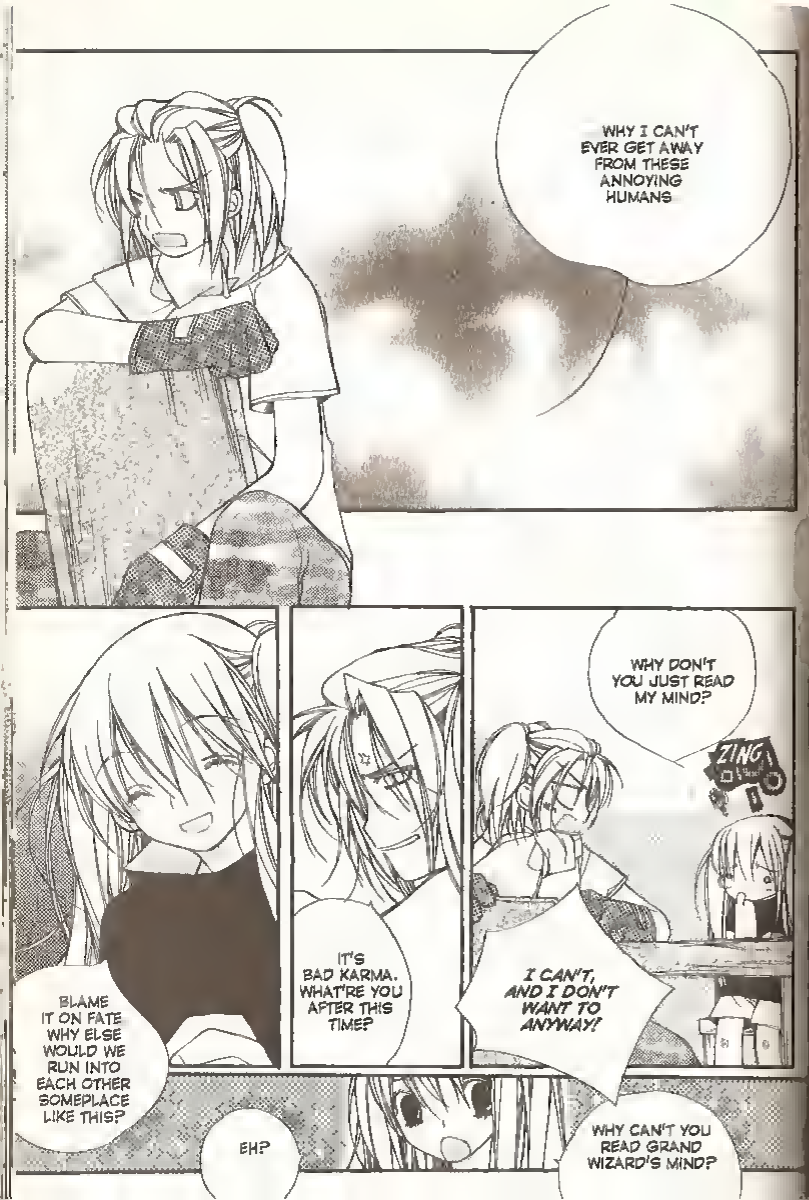

LIAR.
GET A GRIP!!
DON'T BE WEAK!
ACTING LIKE EVERYTHING'S OKAY IS TIRING
BUT IF I DON'T KEEP IT UP, THEY'LL WORRY ABOUT ME.
RIKA .
I HEARD THAT YOU'RE LEAVING US AGAIN. ..YOU DON'T HATE US, DO YOU?
I'M SORRY, CELINE...
...BUT THERE'S STILL...
HAS WHAT THE DRAGON TOLD YOU MADE IT UNBEARABLE FOR YOU HERE?
YOU ALWAYS TRY TO LEAVE AGAIN THE MOMENT YOU GET HOME.
NO, I DON'T
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT, AUNTIE. YOU'VE GOT ME ALL WRONG


I JUST WANT TO SEE EVERYTHING AND LEARN ALL THERE IS TO KNOW.
I'M NOT GOING TO WASTE MY TIME FOOLING AROUND ANYMORE.
IF I'D BEEN THE SLIGHTEST BIT STRONGER, I'D NEVER HAVE LET GO OF NOMI.
SOMEDAY, I'LL FIND NOMI AGAIN. I'LL GET HIM BACK!!

THEY SAID YOU LOOK LIKE ME.
WOW! MY BANGS ARE WAY LONGER!

THIS IS FAR ENOUGH. TIME TO GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS.
YES, THAT'S FINE. THANKS FOR YOUR HELP. I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE
GOOD-BYE!
IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS
GRAB
AGAIN SHE SPEAK'S, BUT HER WORDS ARE EMPTY!

I WISH I COULD SAY THE SAME!
I DIDN'T WANNA SEE YOU AGAIN, EITHER!
OMIGA, YOU'RE STOKED TO SEE ME!
NOT EVEN CLOSE.
LOOK WHO WE HAVE HERE! MASTER WHITE DRAGON!
I'M SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU.
GRAND WIZARD! WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?
OH, RIKA! LONG TIME NO SEE!
TOK TOK TOK
WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?!
SPLAT
I REALLY WANT TO KNOW.
DRAGON TACKLE!

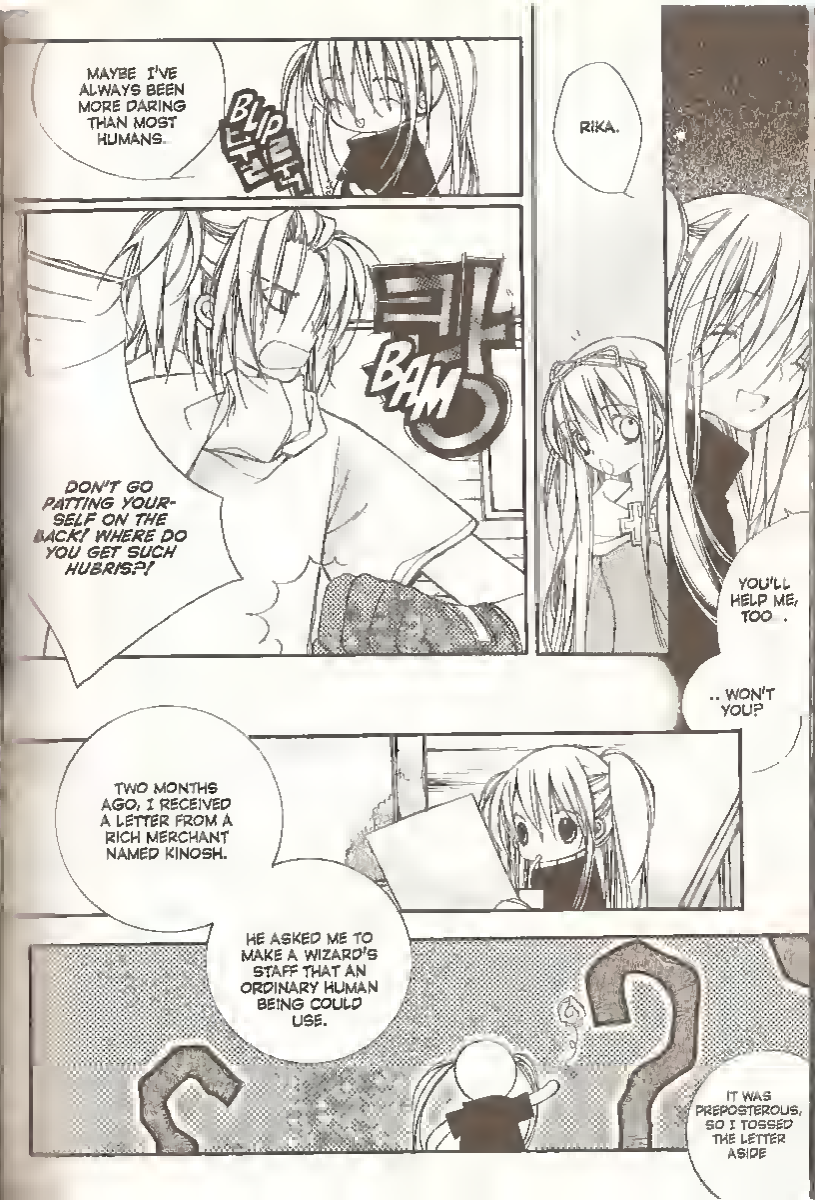

WHY I CAN'T EVER GET AWAY FROM THESE ANNOYING HUMANS
BLAME IT ON FATE WHY ELSE WOULD WE RUN INTO EACH OTHER SOMEPLACE LIKE THIS?
IT'S BAD KARMA. WHAT'RE YOU AFTER THIS TIME?
WHY DON'T YOU JUST READ MY MIND?
ZING
I CAN'T, AND I DON'T WANT TO ANYWAY!
EH?
WHY CAN'T YOU READ GRAND WIZARD'S MIND?

500-YEARS-OLD HE MAKES ME CRAVE LIKE A BOTTLE OF AGED LIQUOR
HE'S NOT A 500-YEARS-OLD GRAND WIZARD FOR NOTHING.
AND HE LOVES HAVING OTHER PEOPLE DO HIS BIDDING.
NEVER! YOU HAVE ME ALL WRONG!
STOP LYING! ALL YOU DO IS PUSH PEOPLE AROUND!
YOU TRY TO ACT LIKE YOU'RE ALL CUTE, BUT YOU'RE JUST LURING PEOPLE IN. "DO THIS FOR ME, DO THAT FOR ME!" NAG, NAG, NAG.
ITCH!
PUNCH
YOU'RE LAZY AND USELESS, THE WORST EXAMPLE OF A HUMAN BEING I'VE EVER SEEN!
CALLING YOU A "GRAND" WIZARD IS A JOKE! YOU MAY CARRY THAT MAGIC STAFF, BUT YOU DO NOTHING WITH IT!
STAB
ITCH!
KRRACK
THE GRAND WIZARD...
ACK MY MY HEART IS...
...DROPS DEAD

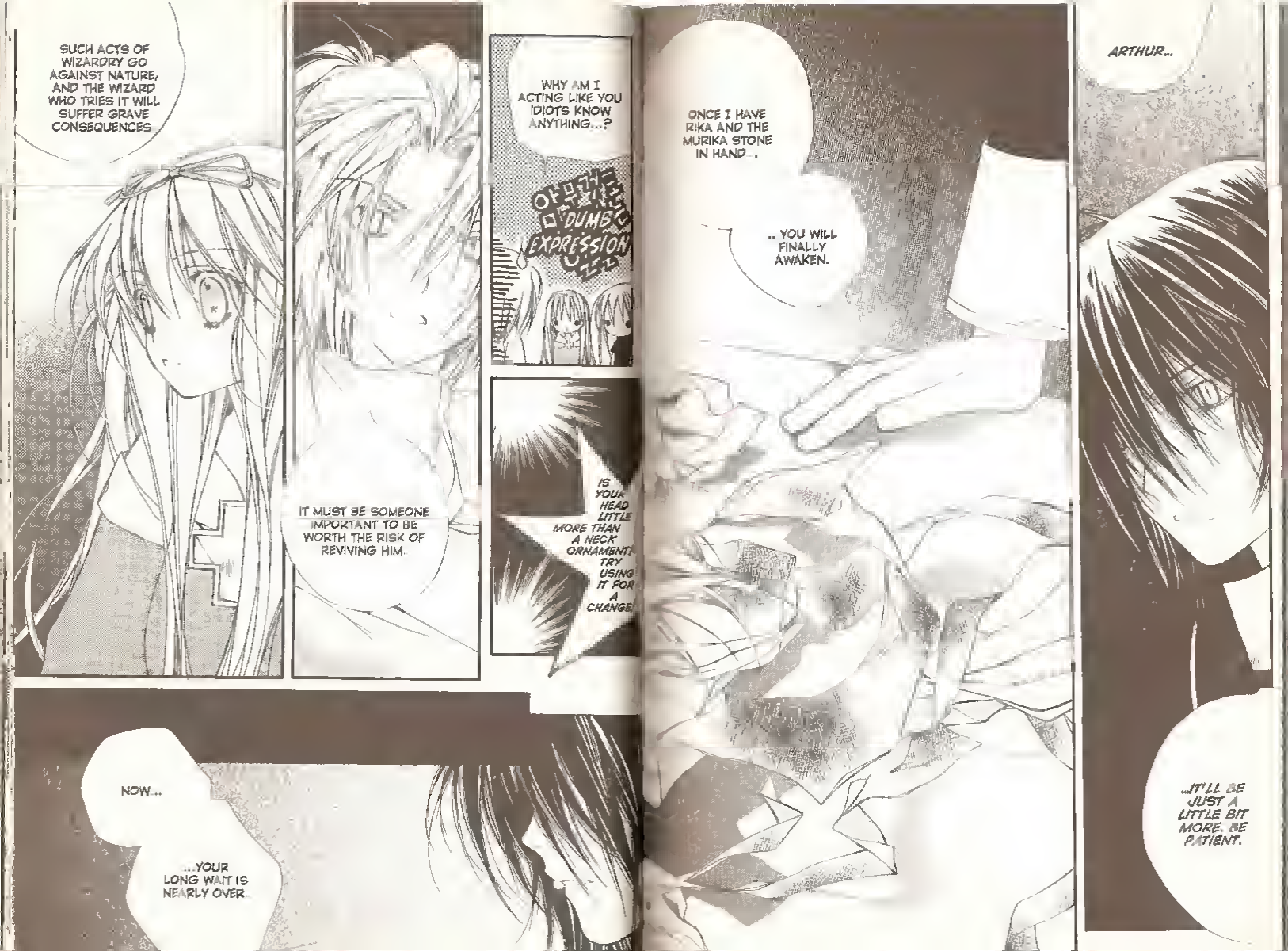
STAY DOWN, AND STAY DEAD.
HOW HAVE I EARNED SUCH NEVER-ENDING HOSTILITY?
SOB
SHUT UP!!
I FINALLY FOUND IT!
A BEAUTIFUL STAR-BLOOMING TREE♥ YOU WAIT HERE, AND I'LL BE RIGHT BACK TO TAKE YOU HOME.
BUT IN THOSE PRECIOUS MOMENTS HE WAS AWAY...
WHY DID YOU CUT DOWN MY TREE?!
*THE WHITE DRAGON LIKE: FARMER'S CLOTHES EVEN BACK THEN.
I WAS GOING TO MAKE A STAFF WITH IT...
THAT WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE CURSED CONNECTION BETWEEN ME AND THE GRAND WIZARD
I GET ANGRY JUST THINKING ABOUT IT
YOU'VE ALWAYS HAD A TINY HEART...

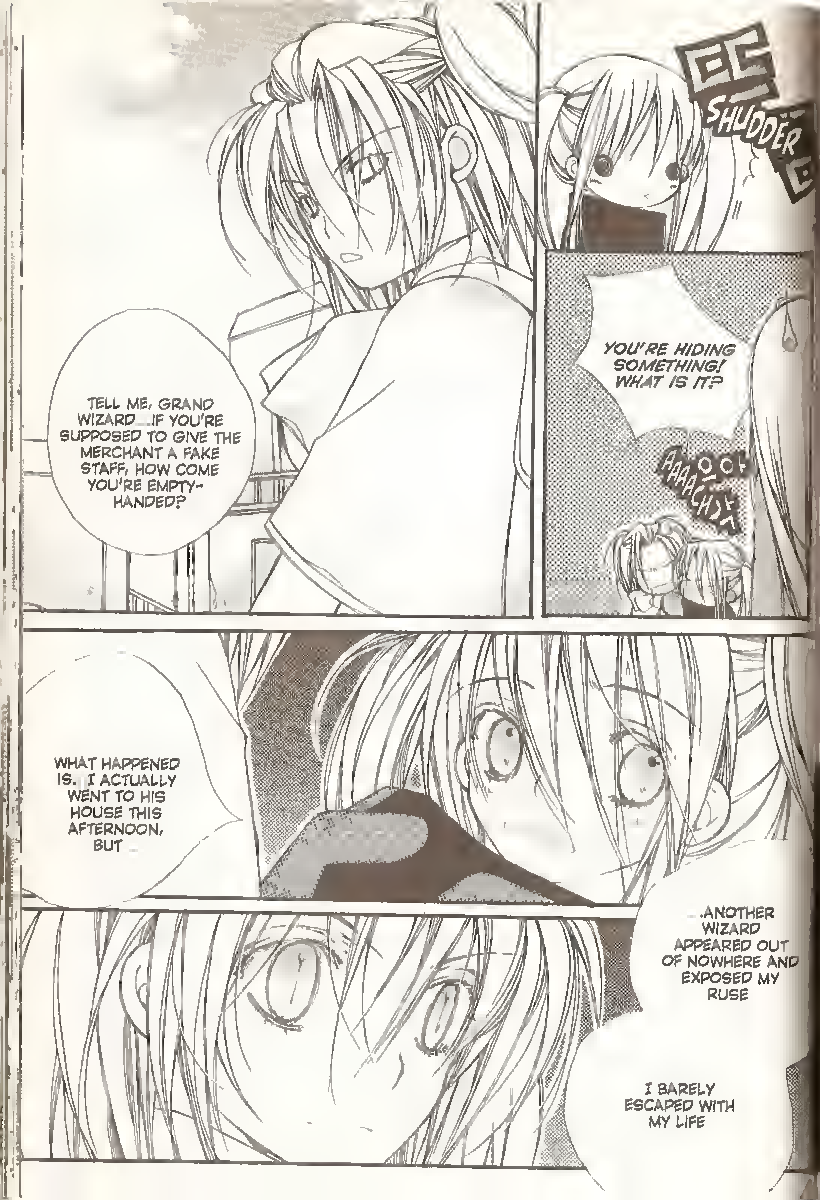
I TOTALLY FORGOT ABOUT ALL THAT.
THAT WOOD CAME IN HANDY. THAT STAFF HAS HELPED MANY ADVICE WIZARDS LIKE RIKA!
THAT MAKES IT EVEN WORSE! YOU DESTROYED MY PRECIOUS TREE FOR HUMANS!
TRYING TO LOOK
THE PAST IS THE PAST... WILL YOU HELP ME NOW?
AS ADORABLE AS POSSIBLE
RIKA IS COMPLETELY NUTTERS.
BANG
YOU'RE NOT AT ALL FUNNY.
I ACTUALLY DISCOVERED A WHOLE FOREST OF STAR-BLOOMING TREES, BUT IF YOU'RE NO LONGER INTERESTED, I'LL JUST USE THEM TO MAKE MORE MAGIC STAFFS.

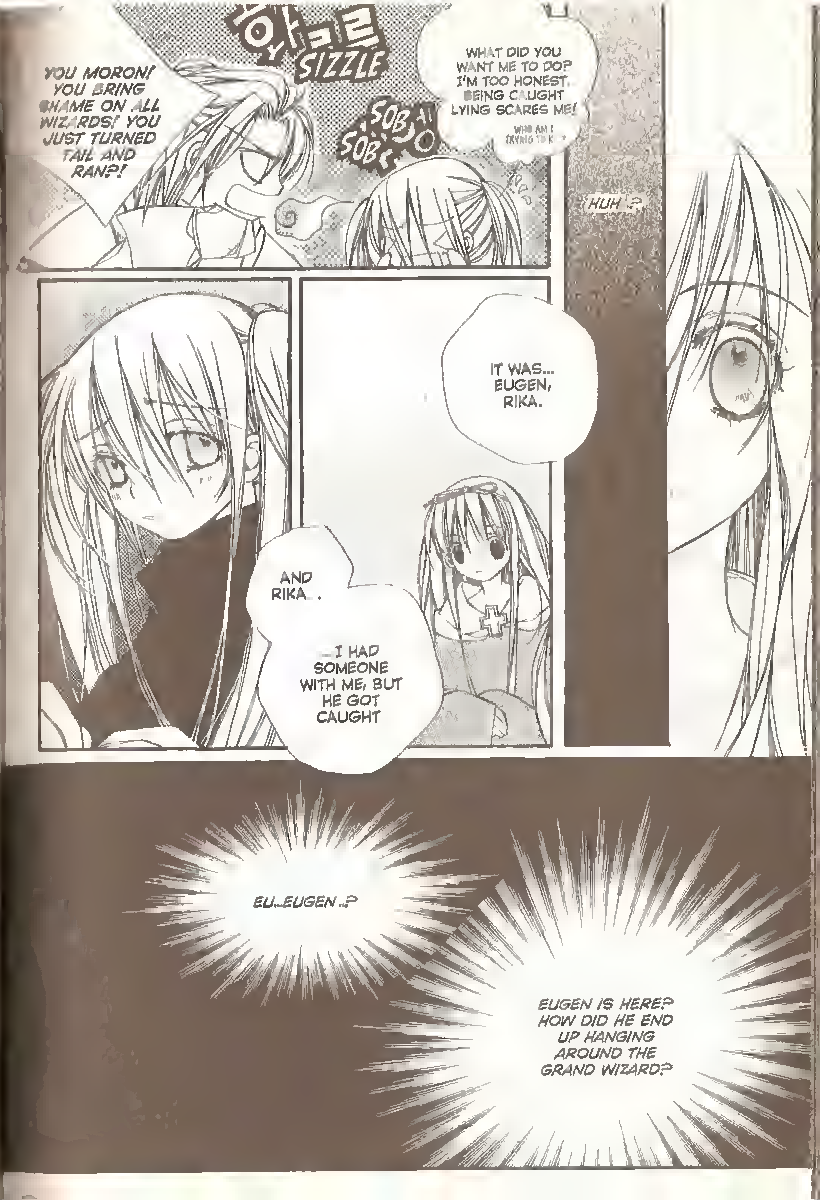
YOU RARELY SEE THAT MANY IN ONE PLACE. IT'D BE A REAL SHAME IF THE RIGHT PERSON DIDN'T CLAIM THEM.
SWISH
IT'S SIMPL BUT IT'LL STILL MA YOU MAD.
FINE! WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT ME TO DO, THEN?!
I WANT YOU TO STEAL SOMETHING FOR ME.
THAT'S RATHER PRESUMPTUOUS OF YOU!!
STEAL? YOU'RE ASKING A DRAGON TO STEAL?!

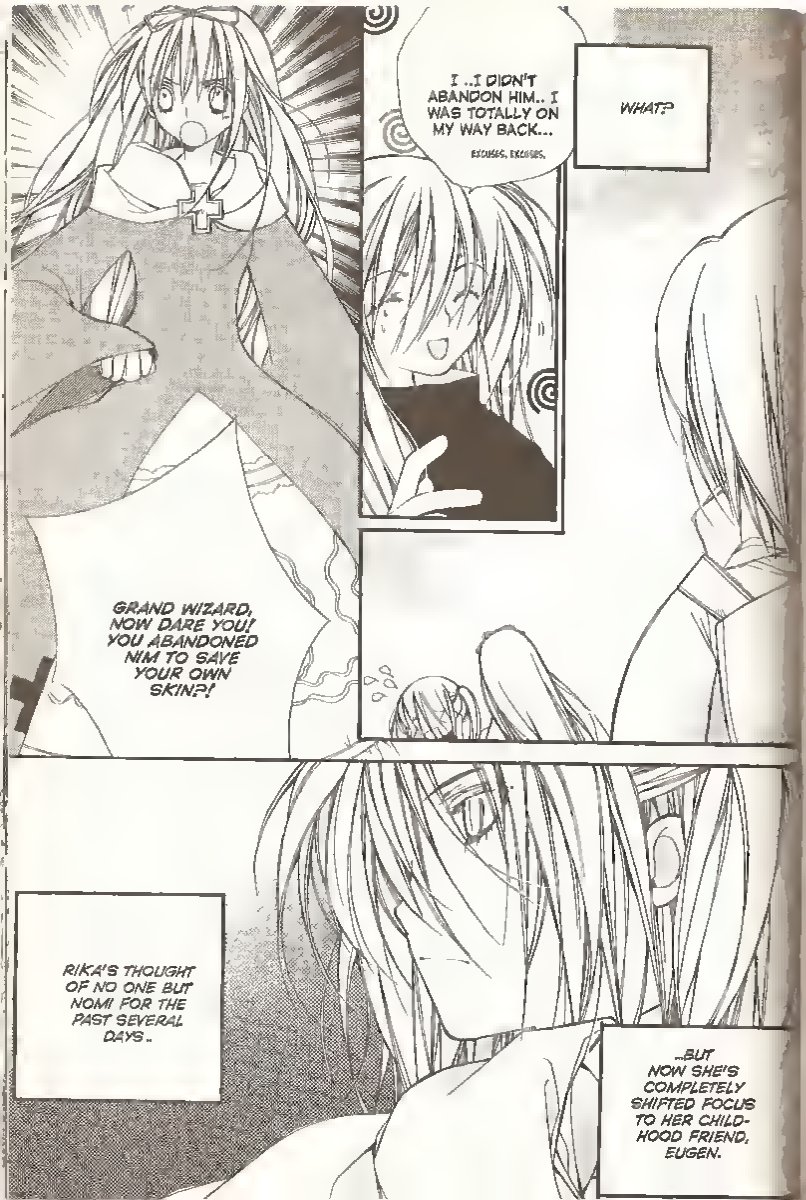

MAYBE I'VE ALWAYS BEEN MORE DARING THAN MOST HUMANS.
BLIP
DON'T GO PATTING YOURSELF ON THE BACK! WHERE DO YOU GET SUCH HUBRIS?!
BAM
RIKA.
YOU'LL HELP ME, TOO.
.. WON'T YOU?
TWO MONTHS AGO, I RECEIVED A LETTER FROM A RICH MERCHANT NAMED KINOSH.
HE ASKED ME TO MAKE A WIZARD'S STAFF THAT AN ORDINARY HUMAN BEING COULD USE.
IT WAS PREPOSTEROUS, SO I TOSSED THE LETTER ASIDE

A REQUEST FOR A STAFF... WHY ARE YOU THROWING THIS LETTER AWAY?
I KNOW IT'S A SILLY IDEA, BUT KINOSH CAN PROBABLY PAY YOU A LOT. WHY DON'T YOU JUST GIVE HIM A STAFF?
BESIDES... YOU STILL OWE ME A FAVOR FOR THAT BLACK WISHSTONE INCIDENT.
I THINK IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO PAY UP.
H-HEY...
EH?
EH?
EH?
S-T-E-A-L?!
I WANT YOU TO STEAL SOMETHING FROM KINOSH WHEN YOU DELIVER THE STAFF TO HIM.
I WANT YOU TO STEAL "THE MURIKA STONE".
WHAT DOES HE NEED IT FOR?
DIDN'T KNOW, I DIDN'T ASK HIM.
SWEAT
SWEAT
YOU DIDN'T ASK? HE ASKS FOR THE MURIKA STONE, AND YOU JUST AGREED TO STEAL IT? ARE YOU STUPID?
SHUDDER
WHAT IS THE MURIKA STONE?
THE MURIKA STONE IS A MAGICAL ITEM THAT CAN BE USED FOR BRINGING BACK THE DEAD.
THOSE KINDS OF TOOLS ARE TOUGH TO GET SINCE THE GUILD BANNED USING SORCERY FOR RESURRECTION.

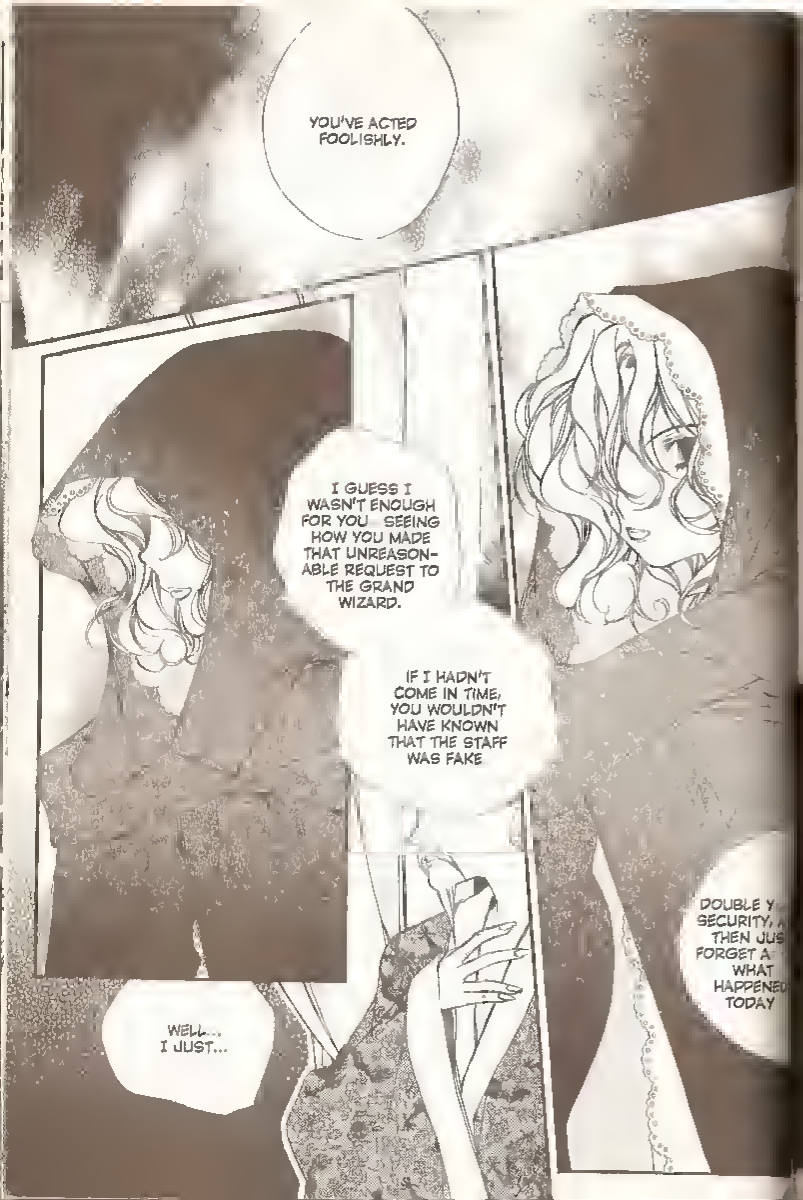

SUCH ACTS OF WIZARDRY GO AGAINST NATURE, AND THE WIZARD WHO TRIES IT WILL SUFFER GRAVE CONSEQUENCES
IT MUST BE SOMEONE IMPORTANT TO BE WORTH THE RISK OF REVIVING HIM.
WHY AM I ACTING LIKE YOU IDIOTS KNOW ANYTHING...?
DUMB EXPRESSION
IS YOUR HEAD LITTLE MORE THAN A NECK ORNAMENT? TRY USING IT FOR A CHANGE.
ONCE I HAVE RIKA AND THE MURIKA STONE IN HAND...
.. YOU WILL FINALLY AWAKEN.
ARTHUR...
...IT'LL BE JUST A LITTLE BIT MORE. BE PATIENT.
NOW...
...YOUR LONG WAIT IS NEARLY OVER.

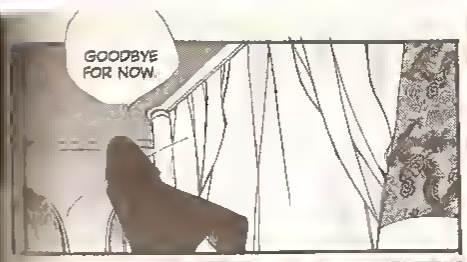

EE
SHUDDER
TELL ME, GRAND WIZARD... IF YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO GIVE THE MERCHANT A FAKE STAFF, HOW COME YOU'RE EMPTY-HANDED?
YOU'RE HIDING SOMETHING! WHAT IS IT?
AAAOOH AAAGHZZ
WHAT HAPPENED IS... I ACTUALLY WENT TO HIS HOUSE THIS AFTERNOON, BUT...
...ANOTHER WIZARD APPEARED OUT OF NOWHERE AND EXPOSED MY RUSE
I BARELY ESCAPED WITH MY LIFE


YOU MORON! YOU BRING SHAME ON ALL WIZARDS! YOU JUST TURNED TAIL AND RAN?!
SIZZLE
SOB SOB
WHAT DID YOU WANT ME TO DO? I'M TOO HONEST. BEING CAUGHT LYING SCARES ME!
WHO AM I TRYING TO K
HUH...?
IT WAS... EUGEN, RIKA.
AND RIKA...
...I HAD SOMEONE WITH ME, BUT HE GOT CAUGHT
EU...EUGEN...?
EUGEN IS HERE? HOW DID HE END UP HANGING AROUND THE GRAND WIZARD?

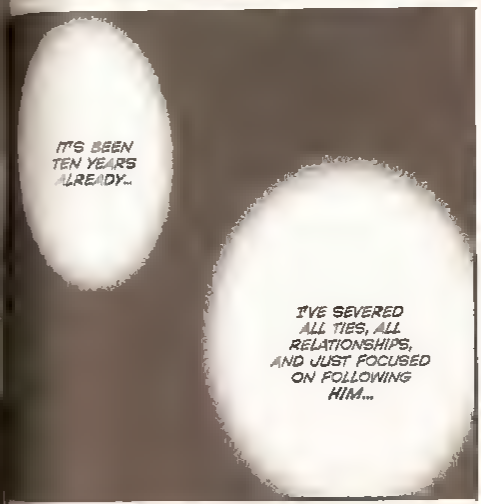

I ..I DIDN'T ABANDON HIM.. I WAS TOTALLY ON MY WAY BACK...
EXCUSES, EXCUSES.
WHAT?
GRAND WIZARD, HOW DARE YOU! YOU ABANDONED NIM TO SAVE YOUR OWN SKIN?!
RIKA'S THOUGHT OF NO ONE BUT NOM! FOR THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS..
..BUT NOW SHE'S COMPLETELY SHIFTED FOCUS TO HER CHILD-HOOD FRIEND, EUGEN.

YOU!
YES, YOU! LITTLE HUMAN GIRL!
YOU READ MY MIND AGAIN, DIDN'T YOU?! I TOLD YOU NOT TO DO THAT!
FLASH
ARE YOU CAPABLE OF THINKING ABOUT ANYTHING OTHER THAN BOYS?
DO YOU REALLY GET OFF ON PEEPING INTO SOMEONE ELSE'S THOUGHTS? YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A NASTY VOYEUR!
DOO-
-OOII
WHO'RE YOU CALLING A VOYEUR? YOU BETTER WATCH YOUR MOUTH, YOU STINKING LUMP OF NUMANITY!


YOU'VE ACTED FOOLISHLY.
I GUESS I WASN'T ENOUGH FOR YOU... SEEING HOW YOU MADE THAT UNREASONABLE REQUEST TO THE GRAND WIZARD.
IF I HADN'T COME IN TIME, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE KNOWN THAT THE STAFF WAS FAKE
WELL... I JUST...
DOUBLE Y SECURITY, THEN JUS FORGET A WHAT HAPPENED TODAY

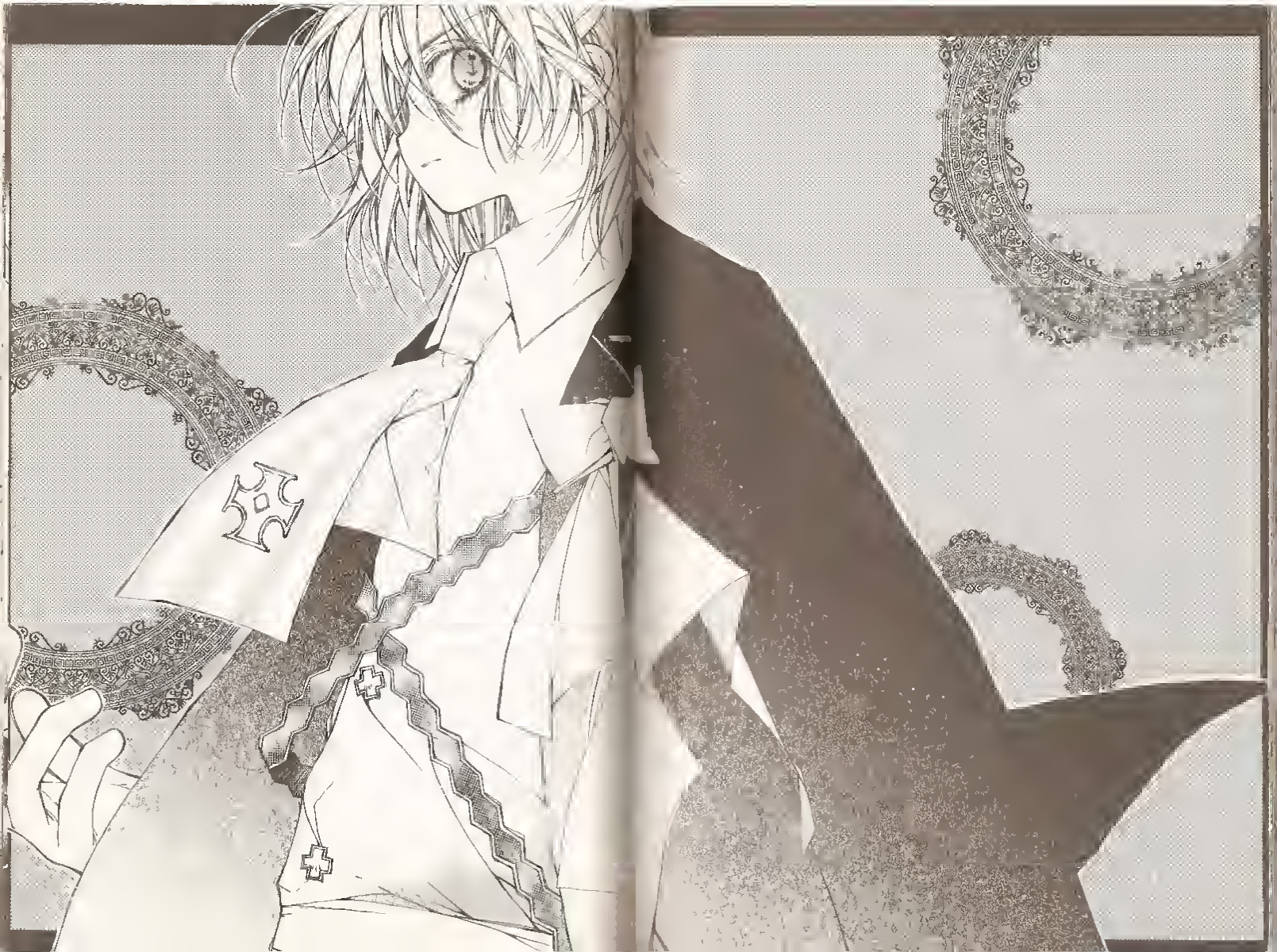

GOODBYE FOR NOW.

THE GRAND WIZARD DIDN'T SEEM TO REMEMBER ME.

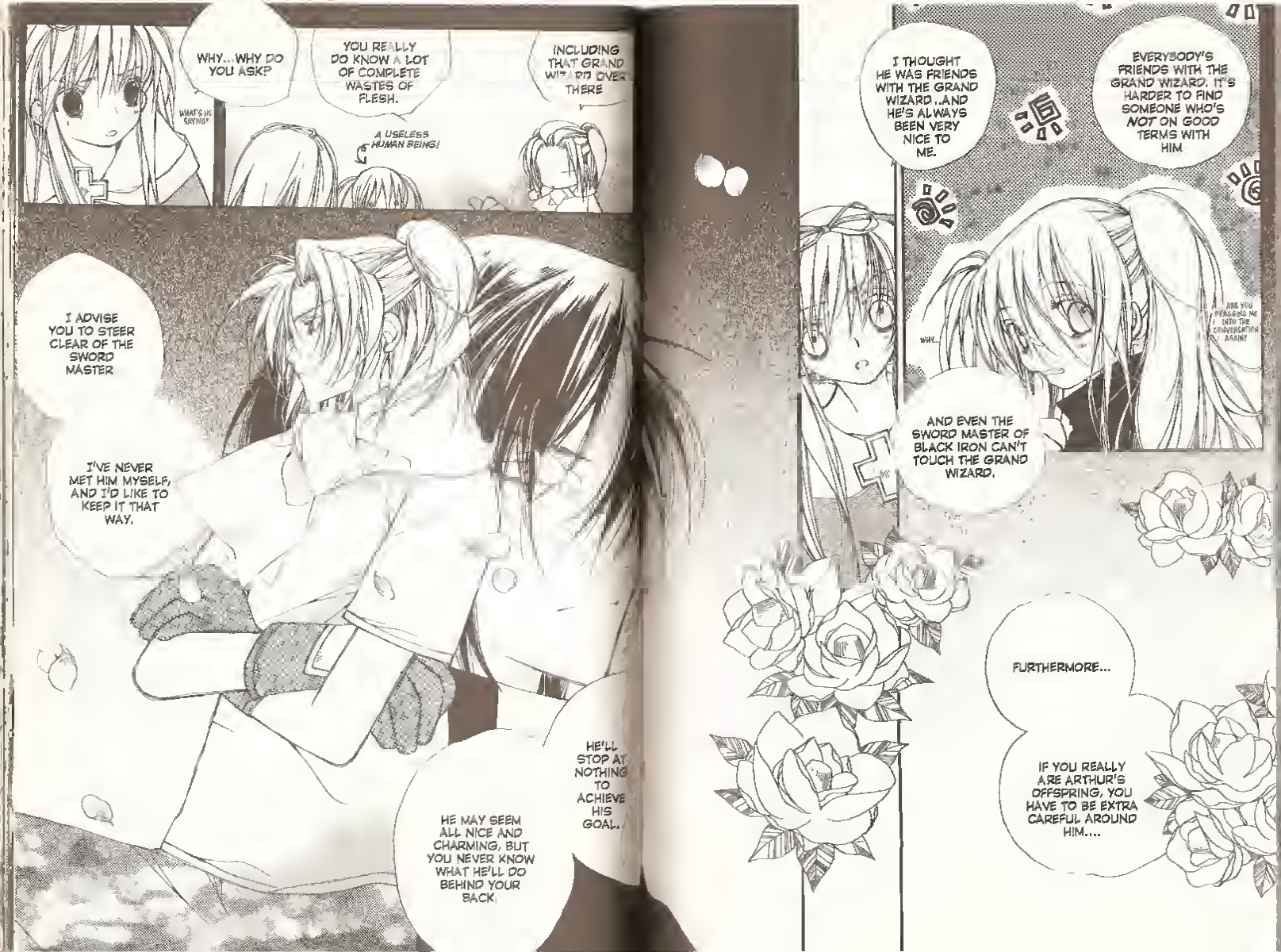

IT'S BEEN TEN YEARS ALREADY...
I'VE SEVERED ALL TIES, ALL RELATIONSHIPS, AND JUST FOCUSED ON FOLLOWING HIM...

...THE SWORD MASTER OF BLACK IRON!

THERE'S NO DENYING IT. HE'S TRYING TO BRING ARTHUR BACK TO LIFE I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO STOP HIM!
HE UNEARTHED ARTHUR'S GRAVE AND STOLE THE CORPSE.
AND NOW HE'S TRYING TO STEAL BOTH RIKA AND THE MURIKA STONE.
IT'S GOING TO BE UP TO YOU TO TAKE CARE OF THE GUARDS OUTSIDE THE HOUSE.
UCK OFF
DON'T KILL HIM
Sniff Sniff
WHY ARE YOU MAKING ME DO THIS?!
THERE ARE TEN GUARDS OUTSIDE AND TWENTY INSIDE... YOU'LL HAVE TO DISPOSE OF THEM QUIETLY.
WE MUST ENTER THE HOUSE UNDETECTED.
WHAT...?

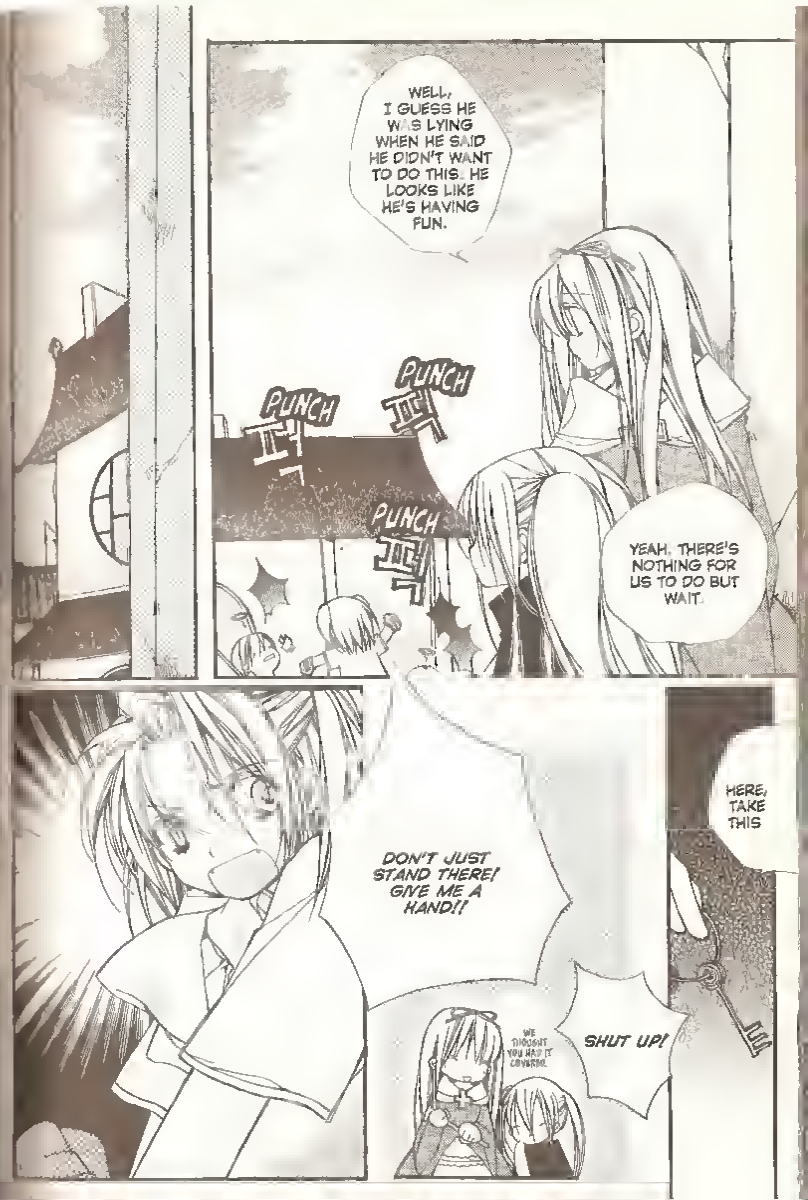


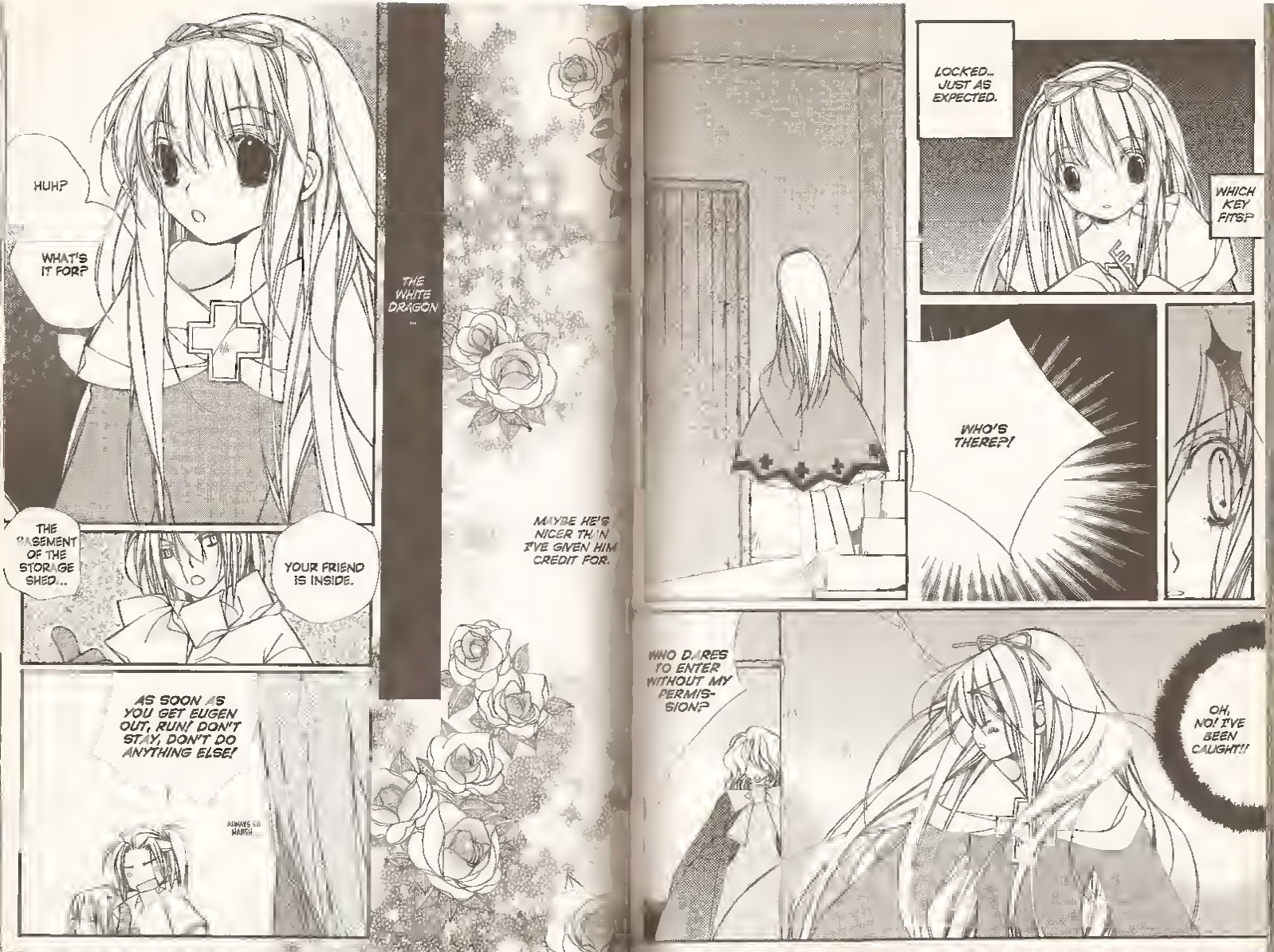
IN OTHER WORDS.
YOU WANT ME TO DO ALL THE DIRTY WORK!!!
CRUNCH
WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO? STAND THERE AND WATCH?!
HE HAS ALL THAT POWER AFTER ALL.
IT WON'T KILL HIM TO MAKE USE OF IT.
YES. IS THAT OKAY?
WHY DO I HAVE TO RISK MY NECK TO FIX YOUR MESS?!
THIS IS THE WAY I AM. I CAN'T CHANGE...I'LL BE THIS WAY UNTIL THE DAY I DIE.
YOU'RE STRETCHING MY SHIRT!
THE GRAND WIZARD
DEAD FROM FOOLING AROUND
BY THE WAY, GRAND WIZARD...HOW DID YOU END UP TRAVELING WITH EUGEN?
IT HURTS...
EH? RIKA, YOU DIDN'T KNOW?
HE CAME TO MY HOUSE A WEEK AGO AND BEGGED ME TO ACCEPT HIM AS MY APPRENTICE.
I REFUSED, OF COURSE, BUT HE REFUSED TO LEAVE UNTIL I SAID YES!
I HAD NO IDEA...
COME TO THINK OF IT...
...I HAVEN'T TALKED TO HIM IN A WHILE.
THE LAST TIME I TALKED TO HIM, I WAS RETURNING FROM THE DARK PRINCE'S CASTLE
I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO TEACH HIM.
RIKA, ARE YOU ACQUAINTED WITH THE SWORD MASTER OF BLACK IRON?


WHY...WHY DO YOU ASK?
YOU REALLY DO KNOW A LOT OF COMPLETE WASTES OF FLESH.
INCLUDING THAT GRAND WIZARD OVER THERE
WHAT'S HE SAYING?
A USELESS HUMAN BEING!
I ADVISE YOU TO STEER CLEAR OF THE SWORD MASTER
I'VE NEVER MET HIM MYSELF, AND I'D LIKE TO KEEP IT THAT WAY.
HE MAY SEEM ALL NICE AND CHARMING, BUT YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT HE'LL DO BEHIND YOUR BACK.
HE'LL STOP AT NOTHING TO ACHIEVE HIS GOAL.
I THOUGHT HE WAS FRIENDS WITH THE GRAND WIZARD ..AND HE'S ALWAYS BEEN VERY NICE TO ME.
EVERYBODY'S FRIENDS WITH THE GRAND WIZARD. IT'S HARDER TO FIND SOMEONE WHO'S NOT ON GOOD TERMS WITH HIM
WHY...
ARE YOU DRAGGING ME INTO THE CONVERSATION AGAIN?
AND EVEN THE SWORD MASTER OF BLACK IRON CAN'T TOUCH THE GRAND WIZARD.
FURTHERMORE...
IF YOU REALLY ARE ARTHUR'S OFFSPRING, YOU HAVE TO BE EXTRA CAREFUL AROUND HIM....

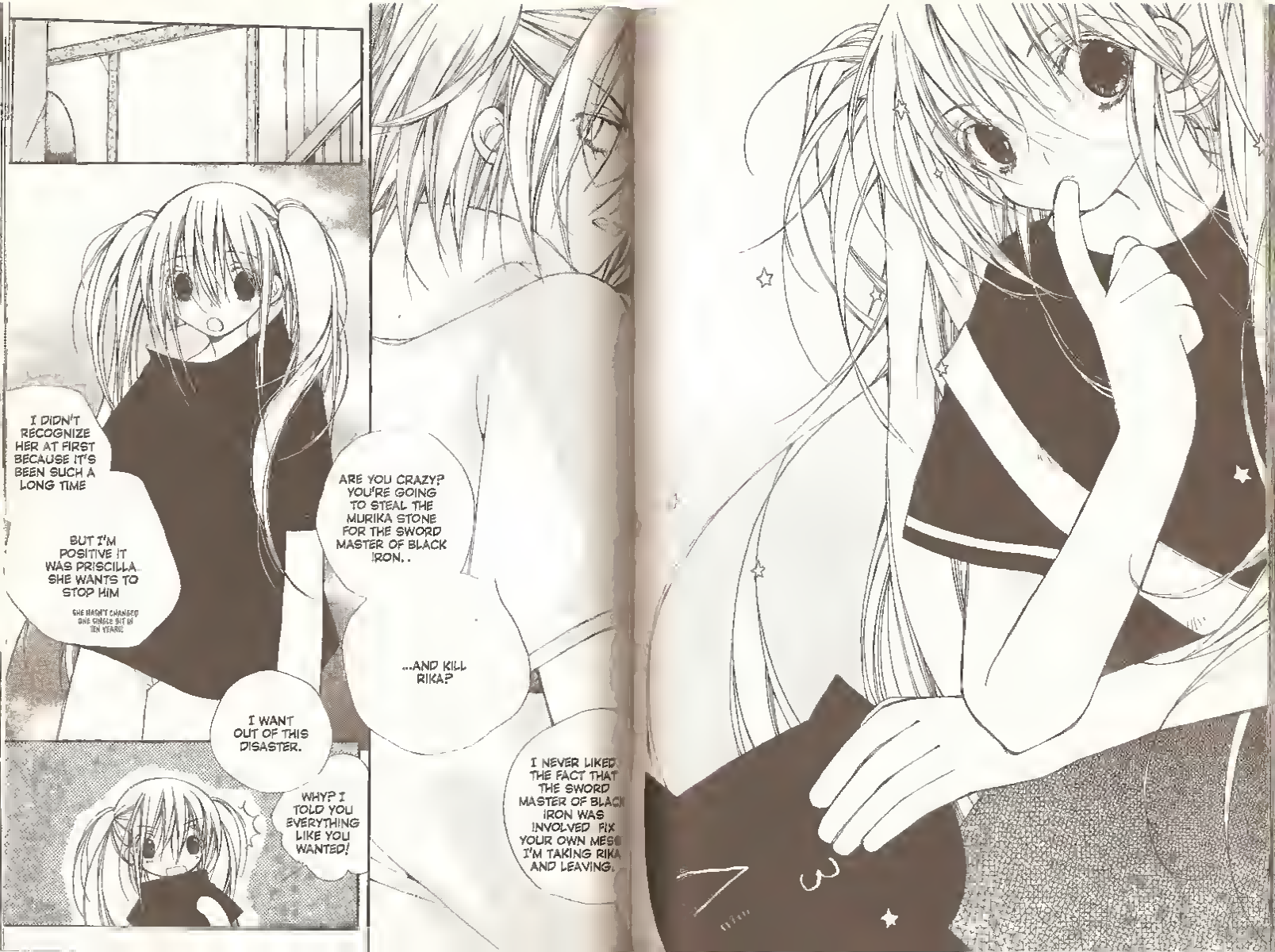
WHAAA--?! RIKA IS ARTHUR'S DAUGHTER? I HAD NO IDEA! WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?
WELL... I ONLY JUST FOUND OUT MYSELF. DID YOU KNOW HIM?
HOW EERIE!
ARTHUR WAS MY FIRST STUDENT, AND HE AND PRISC--.
OH! HUH!
...WAS PRISCILLA, RIKA'S MOTHER!!!
NOW IT ALL MAKES PERFECT SENSE! THAT OTHER WIZARD...
THE FACT THAT PRISCILLA PROTECTED THE MERCHANT...
PROVES IT IS ARTHUR WHO'S TRYING TO RAISE RIKA FROM THE DEAD.
THAT MEANS... ALONG WITH THE MURIKA STONE, THEY NEED HIS DAUGHTER...
RIKA!
?

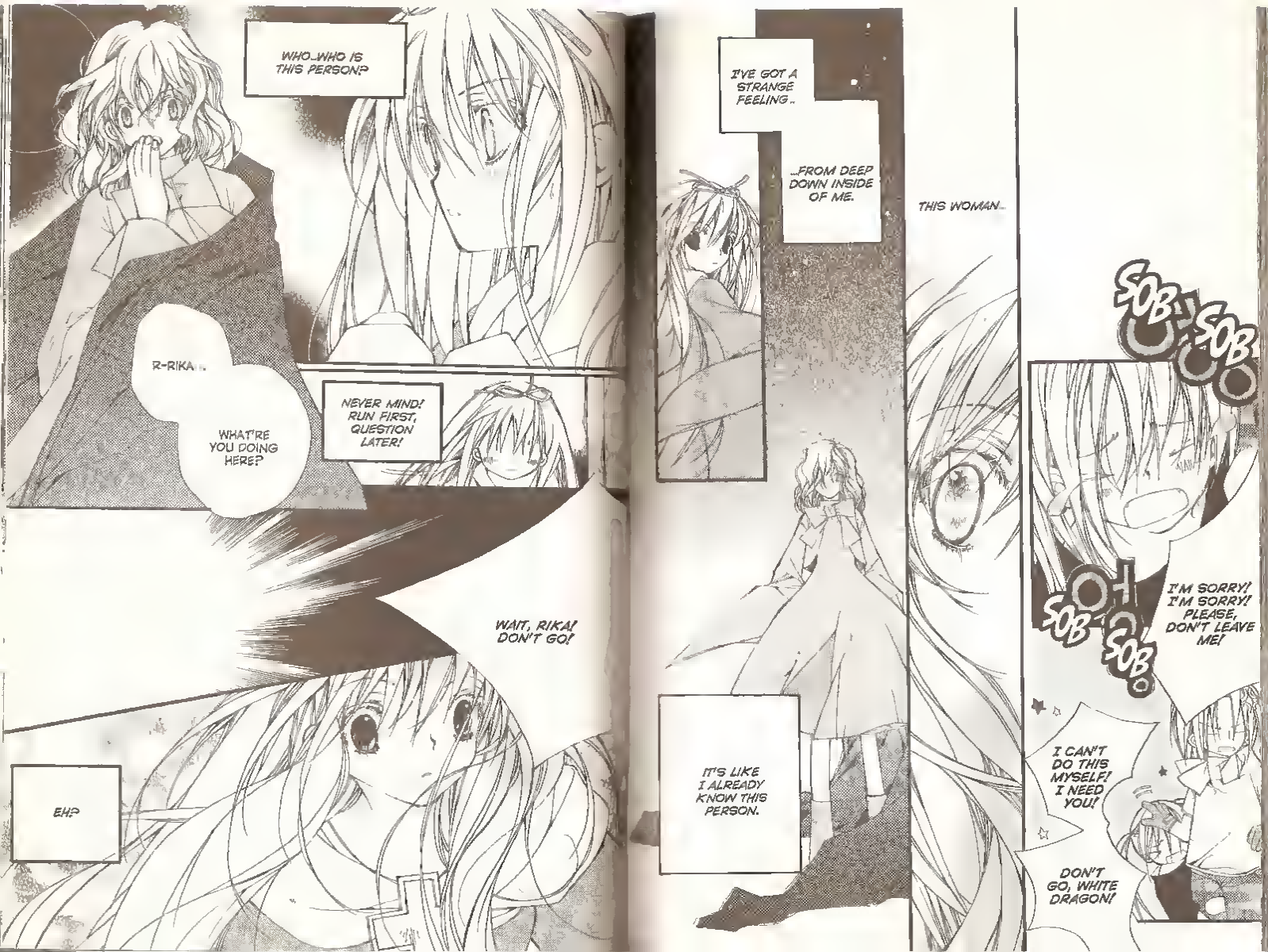
...BUT NOT RIKA'S.
ARTHUR... THERE'S NOTHING I WANT MORE THAN TO HAVE YOU BACK IN MY ARMS
I WOULD GIVE UP MY OWN LIFE TO BRING YOU BACK...
I WOULDN'T TRADE HER FOR ANYTHING...
NOT EVEN YOU.


WELL, I GUESS HE WAS LYING WHEN HE SAID HE DIDN'T WANT TO DO THIS. HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S HAVING FUN.
PUNCH
PUNCH
PUNCH
YEAH. THERE'S NOTHING FOR US TO DO BUT WAIT.
DON'T JUST STAND THERE! GIVE ME A HAND!!
WE THOUGHT YOU HAD IT COVERED.
SHUT UP!
HERE, TAKE THIS

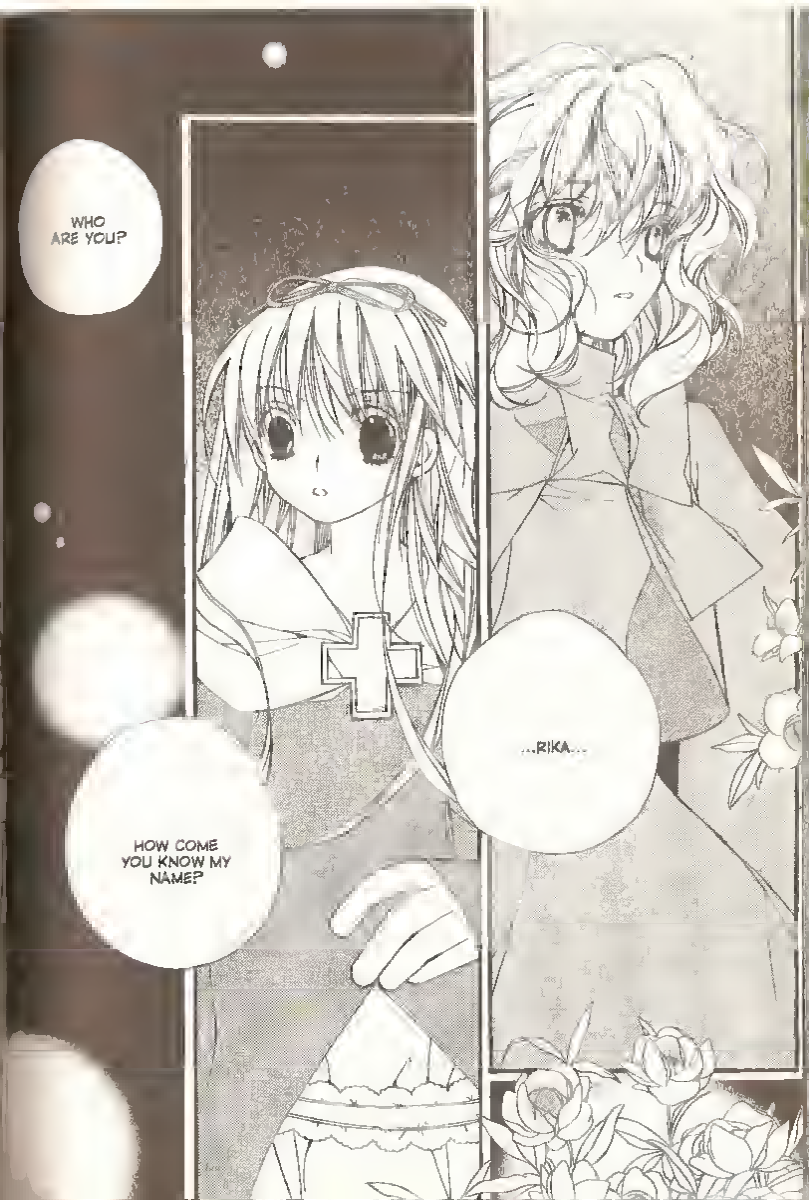

HUH?
WHAT'S IT FOR?
THE BASEMENT OF THE STORAGE SHED...
YOUR FRIEND IS INSIDE.
AS SOON AS YOU GET EUGEN OUT, RUN! DON'T STAY, DON'T DO ANYTHING ELSE!
ALWAYS SO HARSH
THE WHITE DRAGON
MAYBE HE'S NICER THAN I'VE GIVEN HIM CREDIT FOR.
LOCKED... JUST AS EXPECTED.
WHICH KEY FITS?
WHO'S THERE?!
WHO DARES TO ENTER WITHOUT MY PERMISSION?
OH, NO! I'VE BEEN CAUGHT!!

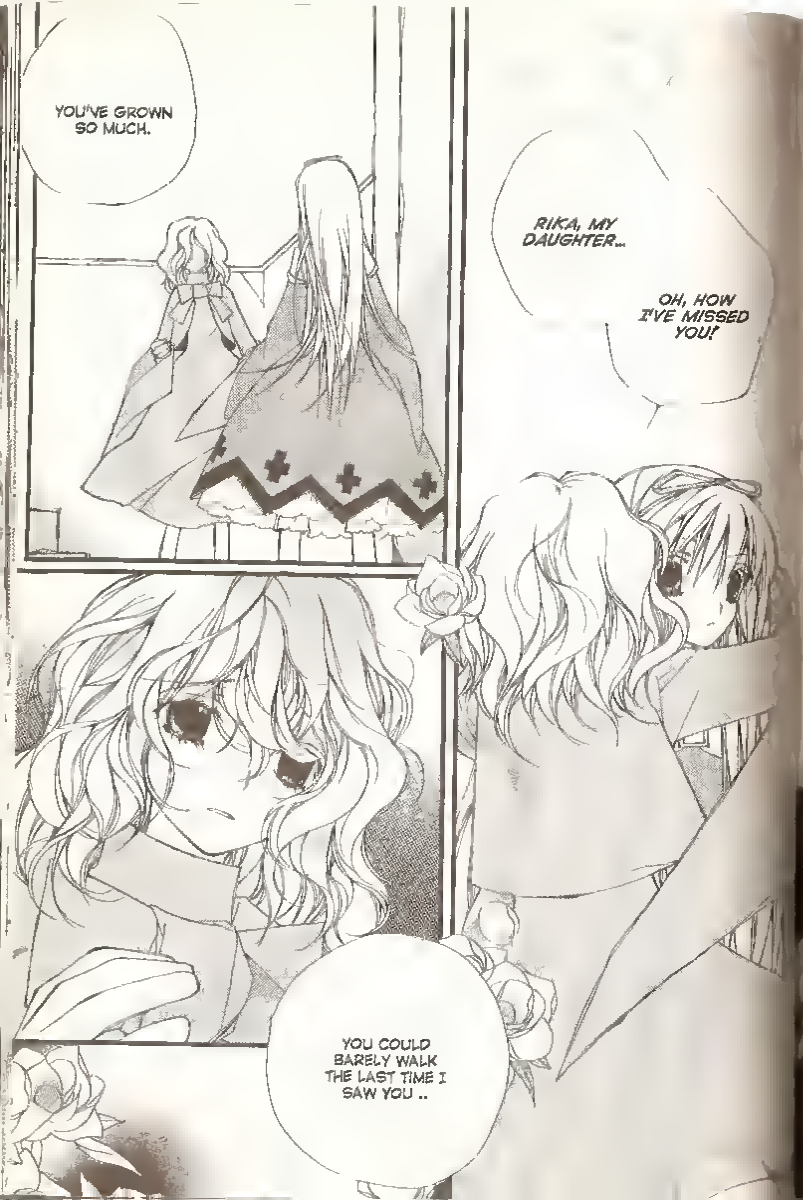
RI...RIKA!!
H-HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE?
TELL ME THE TRUTH.
WHAT?
YOU'RE STILL HIDING SOMETHING FROM ME.
WHERE DO YOU GET SUCH IDEAS? I TOLD YOU EVERY-THING!
SLICK
SLICK
YOU WERE ACTING SUSPI-CIOUS WHEN YOU WERE TALKING TO RIKA.
YOU STARTED CALLING RIKA BY NAME YOU MUST BE STARTING TO LIKE HER
THE GRAND WIZARD DIES AGAIN
WHILE FOOLING AROUND
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! I'LL TELL YOU JUST DON'T HIT ME NO MORE!
QUIT YOUR BLUBBERIN' AND DON'T MINCE WORDS!

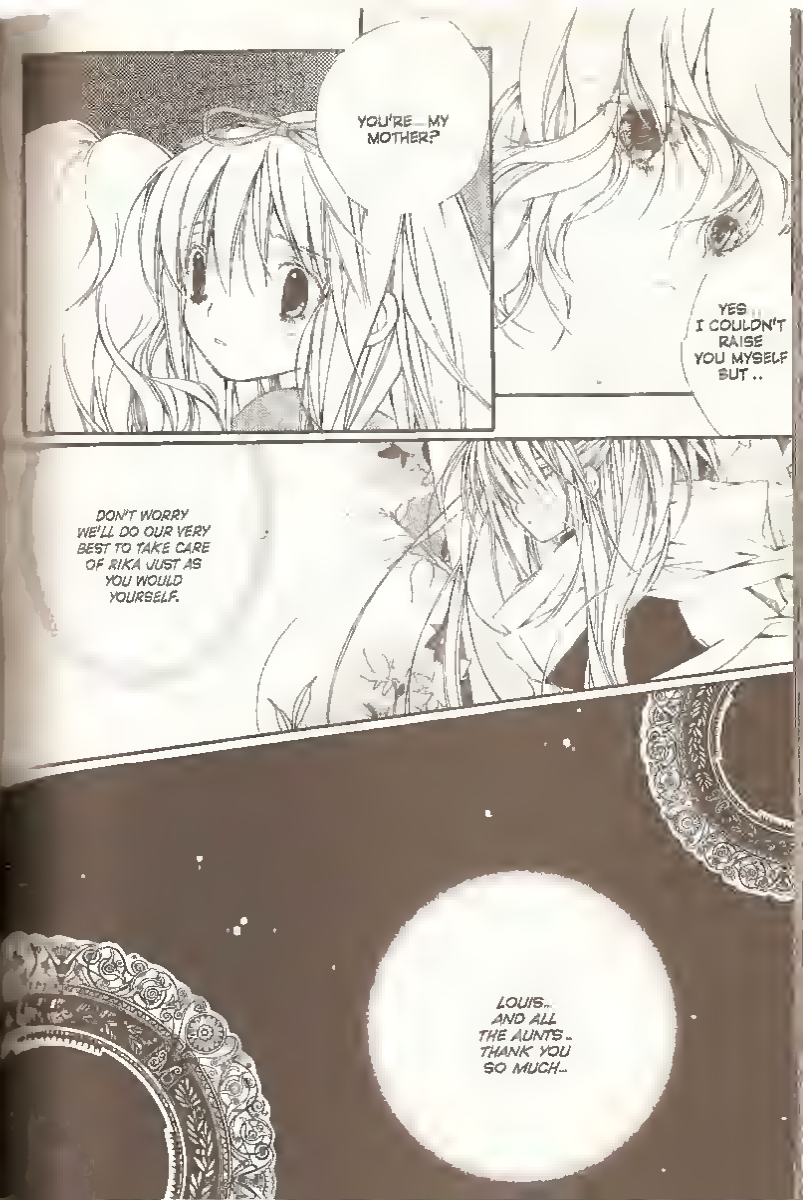

I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE HER AT FIRST BECAUSE IT'S BEEN SUCH A LONG TIME
BUT I'M POSITIVE IT WAS PRISCILLA. SHE WANTS TO STOP HIM
SHE HASN'T CHANGED ONE SINGLE BIT IN TEN YEARS.
ARE YOU CRAZY? YOU'RE GOING TO STEAL THE MURIKA STONE FOR THE SWORD MASTER OF BLACK IRON. .
...AND KILL RIKA?
I WANT OUT OF THIS DISASTER.
WHY? I TOLD YOU EVERYTHING LIKE YOU WANTED!
I NEVER LIKED THE FACT THAT THE SWORD MASTER OF BLACK IRON WAS INVOLVED. FIX YOUR OWN MESS. I'M TAKING RIKA AND LEAVING.


WHO..WHO IS THIS PERSON?
R-RIKA!!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?
NEVER MIND! RUN FIRST, QUESTION LATER!
WAIT, RIKA! DON'T GO!
EH?
I'VE GOT A STRANGE FEELING..
..FROM DEEP DOWN INSIDE OF ME.
THIS WOMAN..
IT'S LIKE I ALREADY KNOW THIS PERSON.
SOB..SOB..
SOB..SOB..
I'M SORRY! I'M SORRY! PLEASE, DON'T LEAVE ME!
I CAN'T DO THIS MYSELF! I NEED YOU!
DON'T GO, WHITE DRAGON!

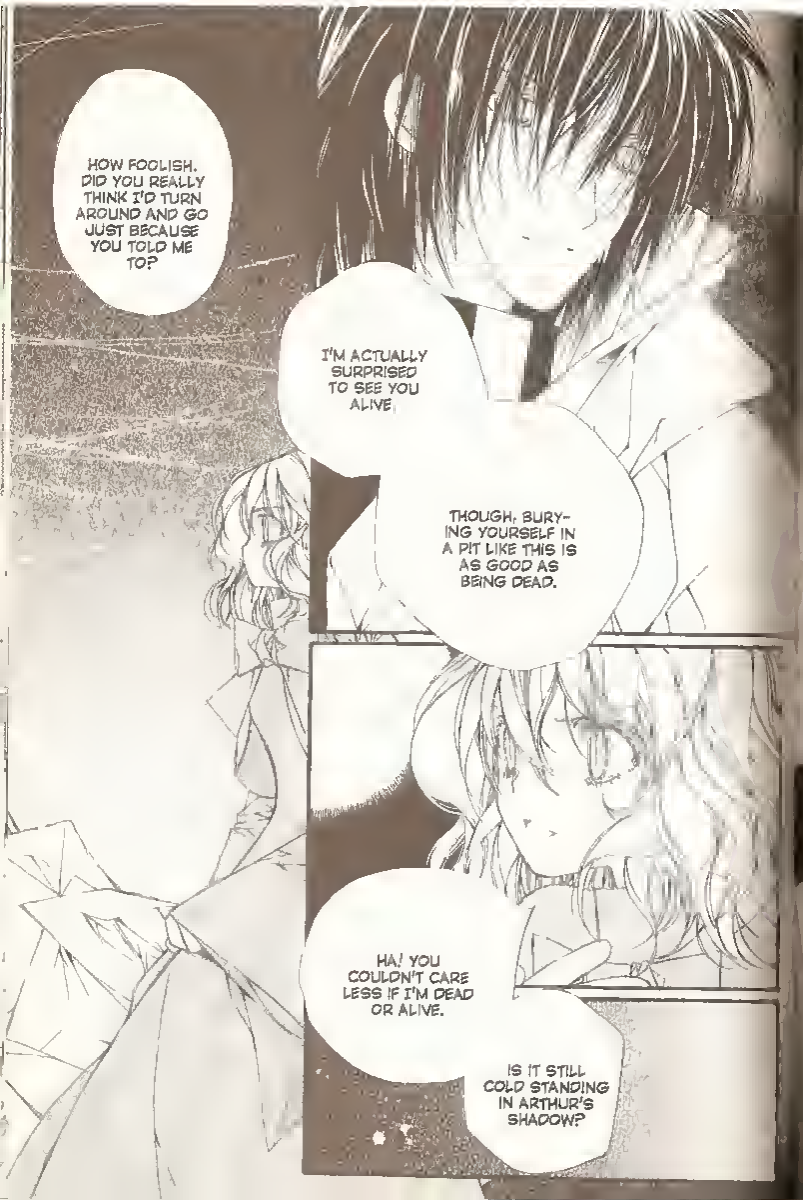
DARN!
DID YOU CALL TO HAVE A PACKAGE PICKED UP?
THE ONLY THING YOU'RE GOOD FOR IS BEING A CRYBABY!
PUSH II SQUEEZE II PUSH
GET OUT OF MY SIGHT!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING?! LET ME OUT!
IT'S REALLY HEAVY, AND SHIPPING COSTS WILL BE EXTRA.
SEND IT BACK
PHEW...I FINALLY TOOK CARE OF THAT ANNOYANCE.


WHO ARE YOU?
...RIKA...
HOW COME YOU KNOW MY NAME?


YOU'VE GROWN SO MUCH.
RIKA, MY DAUGHTER...
OH, HOW I'VE MISSED YOU!
YOU COULD BARELY WALK THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU ..


YOU'RE... MY MOTHER?
YES ... I COULDN'T RAISE YOU MYSELF BUT ..
DON'T WORRY WE'LL DO OUR VERY BEST TO TAKE CARE OF RIKA JUST AS YOU WOULD YOURSELF.
LOUIS.. AND ALL THE AUNTS.. THANK YOU SO MUCH..

MY, WHAT A TOUCHING SCENE! A MOTHER AND DAUGHTER REUNION...
THAT VOICE...!
HOW DID YOU FIND US?!
IS IT REALLY SO STRANGE TO SEE ME?
DID YOU REALLY THINK YOU COULD ELUDE ME?
I'LL ADMIT, YOU KEPT EVERYTHING HIDDEN FOR A GOOD LONG WHILE, BUT...
NO!!!
WHY HAVE YOU COME HERE?!
LEAVE NOW! I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOUR FACE EVER AGAIN!
I'LL NEVER LET YOU TAKE RIKA FROM ME!


HOW FOOLISH. DID YOU REALLY THINK I'D TURN AROUND AND GO JUST BECAUSE YOU TOLD ME TO?
I'M ACTUALLY SURPRISED TO SEE YOU ALIVE.
THOUGH, BURYING YOURSELF IN A PIT LIKE THIS IS AS GOOD AS BEING DEAD.
HA! YOU COULDN'T CARE LESS IF I'M DEAD OR ALIVE.
IS IT STILL COLD STANDING IN ARTHUR'S SHADOW?

YOU CAN'T PRETEND THIS IS WHAT ARTHUR REALLY WANTED! THIS IS ALL ABOUT YOUR GREED!
THAT'S THE ONLY REASON. . .
YOU EVER APPROACHED RIKA.

WAIT A MINUTE! WHAT ARE YOU TWO TALKING ABOUT?
YOU'VE KNOWN ABOUT ME ALL ALONG? EVEN AT THE VERY BEGINNING?
YES... FROM THE MOMENT YOU SHOWED UP IN THE GRAND WIZARD'S FOREST, I'VE KNOWN THE WHOLE STORY
LETTING YOU HAVE THE BLACK WISHSTONE, LENDING YOU A HELPING HAND FROM TIME TO TIME IT WAS ALL PART OF MY GRAND SCHEME.
I..I DON'T BELIEVE IT.
HOW COULD YOU BE SO CALLOUS?
I'VE UNCOVERED EVERYTHING YOU'VE TRIED SO HARD TO KEEP HIDDEN--THIS STONE AND RIKA, TOO.
WHAT'RE YOU GOING TO DO NOW, PRISCILLA?

HOW...HOW DID YOU...?!
ONCE I KNEW YOU HAD THE STONE, THE REST WAS EASY.
YOU CAN PULL ALL THE CLEVER TRICKS YOU WANT, BUT ANYTHING LOST CAN BE FOUND.
YOU'RE THE FINAL PIECE, RIKA.
YOU'RE WHAT I NEED TO BRING FATHER BA
SHE'S SO SMALL... AN EASY FLAME TO SNUFF.
THE MURIKA STONE... AND YOUR LIFE..
THE INGREDIENTS FOR ARTHUR'S RESURRECTION!
I CAN KILL HER WITH A BLINK.
NO ONE COULD PREDICT THAT SHE'D DIE SO YOUNG.
BUT THANKFULLY, HE LEFT YOU BEHIND.

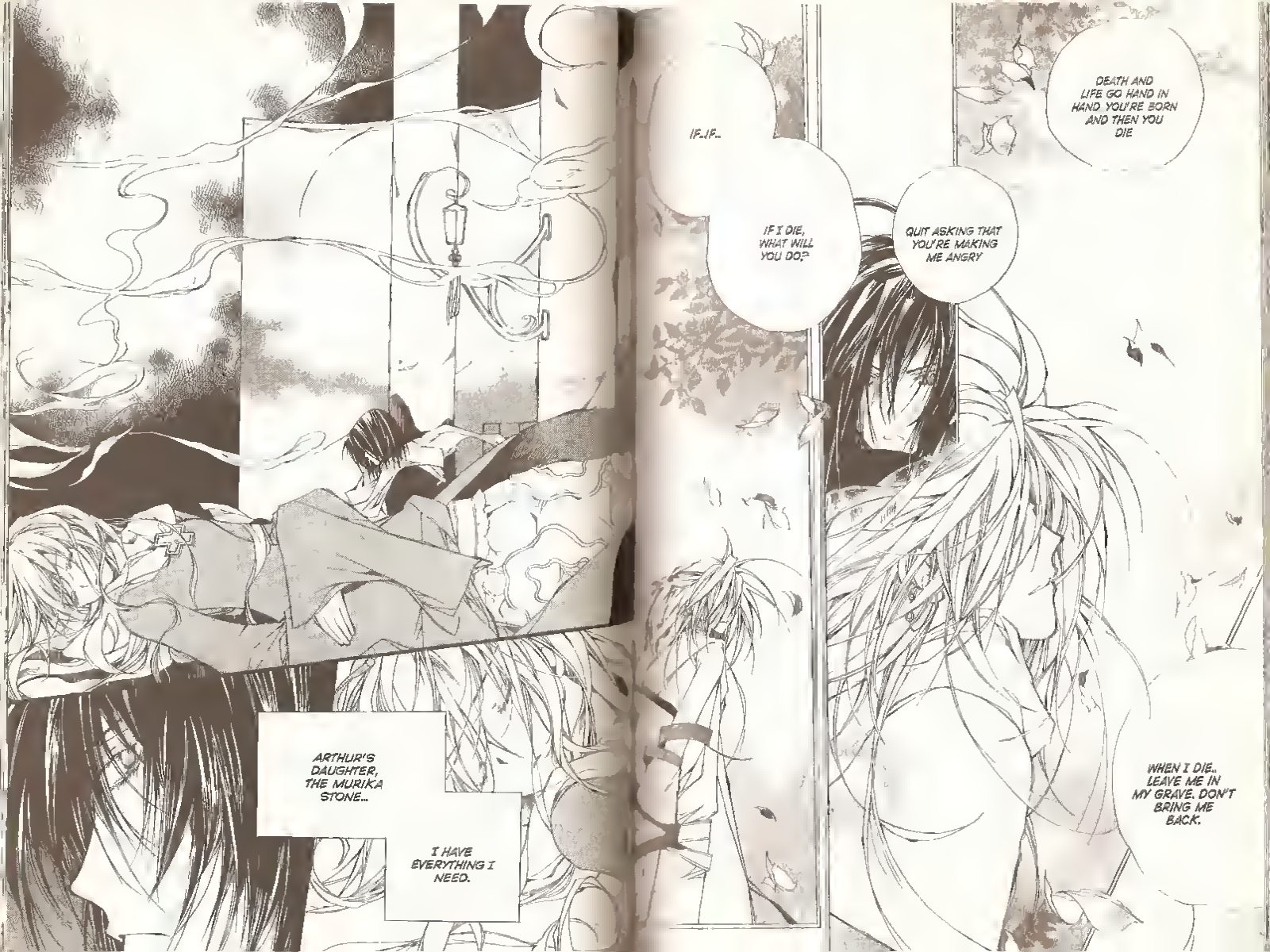
NO, NO, NO!! I SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT RIKA ALONE.
I HOPE SHE'S SAFE!!
IF YOU WANT ME TO DIE FOR A FATHER I'VE NEVER EVEN SEEN...
I WON'T!!
THAT'S A BOLD STATEMENT.
TOO BAD, IT'S NOT YOUR CHOICE!
ZRICKZRKC
RIKA!!
YOU CAN'T! YOU CAN'T HAVE HER!!
STAY BACK! IF YOU GET IN MY WAY, YOU'LL PAY THE PRICE!
MY BUSINESS WITH YOU IS DONE. JUST BE GRATEFUL I'M LETTING YOU LIVE.
YOU ABANDONED HER AND LEFT HER TO FEND FOR HERSELF...
A LITTLE LATE TO BE HER MOTHER?

ARE YOU DUMB ENOUGH TO STUMBLE INTO A WAR..
..YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY WIN?
STRONG...?
NOT REALLY. I JUST KNOW BETTER THAN TO PICK FIGHTS I'LL LOSE
IT MAY SEEM COWARDLY TO YOU..
..BUT YOU'RE DIFFERENT FROM ME.
YOU MAY BE RIGHT, BUT I REFUSE TO BOW DOWN TO YOU! I WON'T SIT AND WATCH YOU KILL MY DAUGHTER!
YOU MEAN IT, DON'T YOU? I GUESS IT'S TIME TO END THIS, THEN
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN A THORN IN MY SIDE, ANYWAY.
ARE YOU PREPARED TO SEE WHAT DEATH LOOKS LIKE?
IS IS THAT HER?

HER MOTHER?
RIKA'S MOTHER?
WAKE UP!!!
WHERE'S RIKA? HAVE YOU SEEN HER?!
DARN IT..I CAN ONLY READ A PART OF HER MIND.
YARN...
RI... RIKA
THERE..
YARN?

WHAT IS THAT? IS SHE TRYING TO TELL ME THAT THIS THREAD WILL LEAD ME TO RIKA?

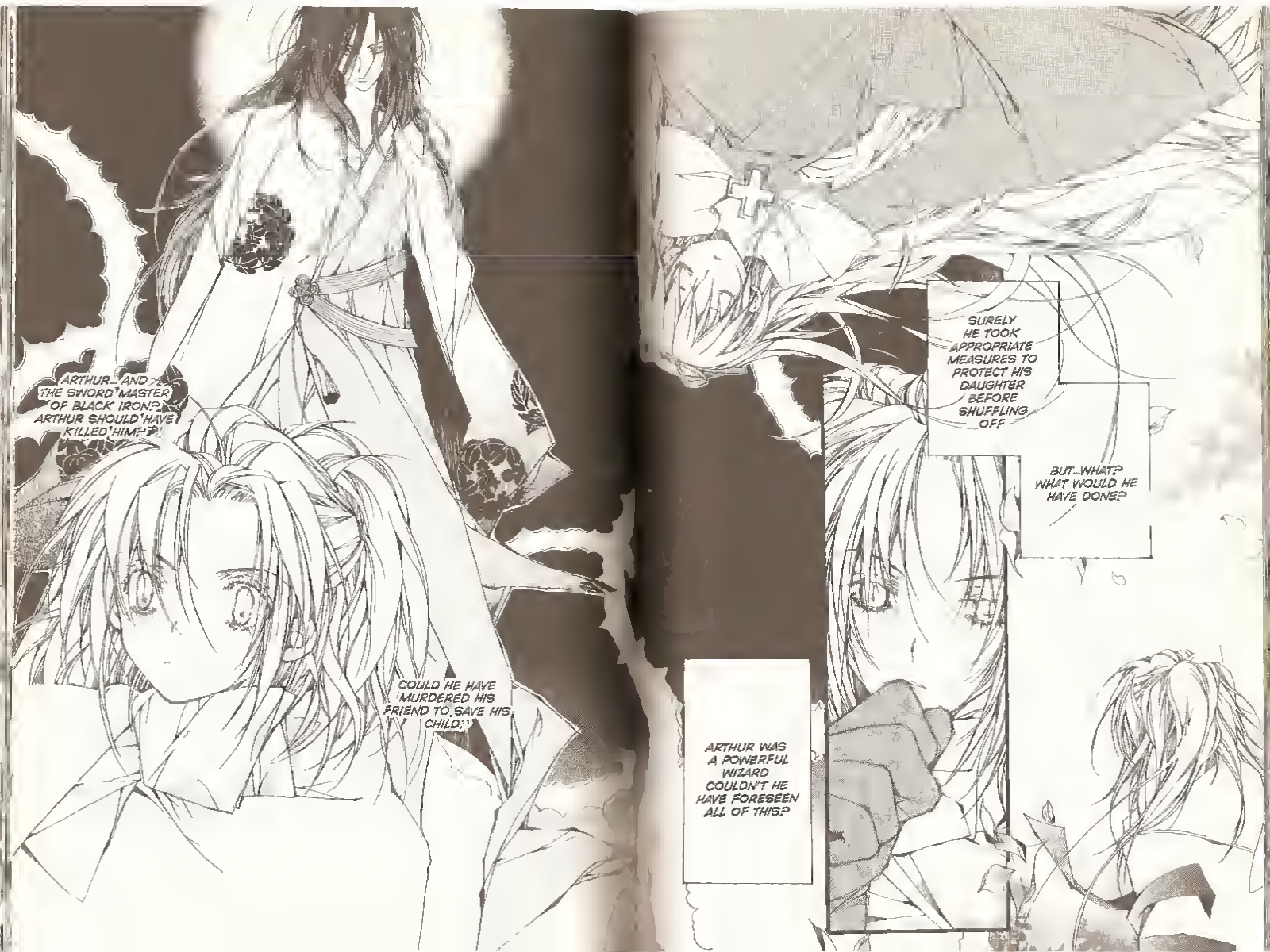
THAT MUST BE IT.
HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD'VE ABDUCTED RIKA SO QUICKLY.
THE SWORD MASTER OF BLACK IRON!
I WISH I'D NEVER GOTTEN INVOLVED.
WHOOM
LADY!
WHAT AM I DOING? WHY KEEP HELPING...?
WAKE UP! ARE YOU GOING TO LIE THERE FOREVER?!
IF YOU'RE SO WORRIED ABOUT YOUR DAUGHTER, GO GET HER YOURSELF!
DON'T ASK SOMEONE ELSE TO DO IT FOR YOU!


ARTHUR'S DAUGHTER, THE MURIKA STONE...
I HAVE EVERYTHING I NEED.
IF..IF..
IF I DIE, WHAT WILL YOU DO?
QUIT ASKING THAT YOU'RE MAKING ME ANGRY
DEATH AND LIFE GO HAND IN HAND. YOU'RE BORN AND THEN YOU DIE
WHEN I DIE.. LEAVE ME IN MY GRAVE. DON'T BRING ME BACK.

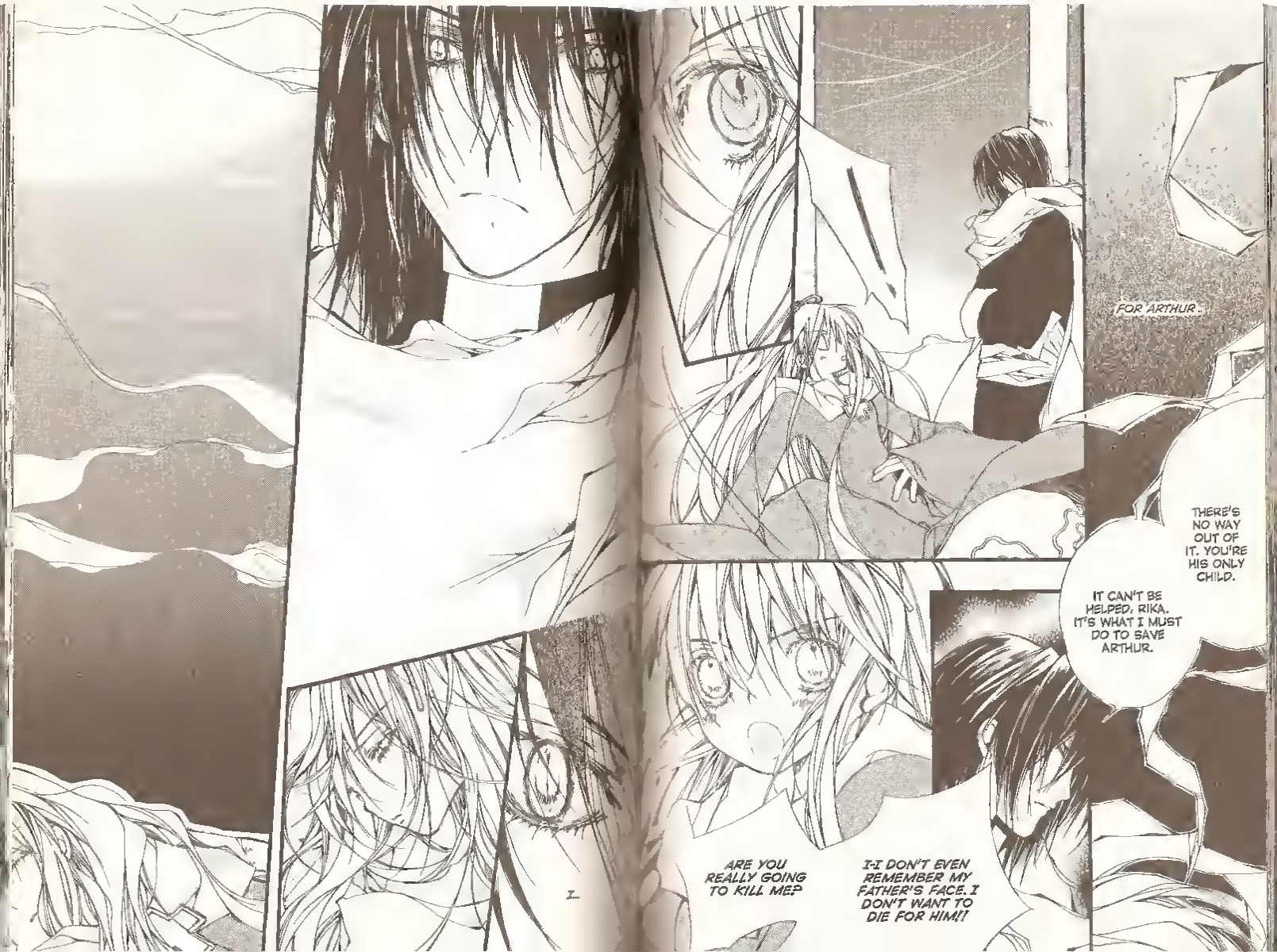
IT'S A MOOT POINT UNTIL YOU HAVE A CHILD WITHOUT OFFSPRING, I COULDN'T BRING YOU BACK EVEN IF I WANTED TO.
HA-HA-HA.
THAT'S TRUE. IT'S NOT EVEN POSSIBLE.
SIX MONTHS LATER..
I RECEIVED WORD OF RIKA'S BIRTH.
LEAVE.
LEAVE ME BE..!

YOU KNEW, DIDN'T YOU, ARTHUR...?
YOU KNEW YOU WERE CLOSE TO DEATH.
AND YOU ALSO KNEW I WOULD USE RIKA TO RESURRECT YOU
YOU WERE RIGHT!
I CAN'T LET YOU DISAPPEAR FROM MY LIFE SO EASILY, ARTHUR!
HE'S GOT ALL THE PIECES TO REVIVE ARTHUR!
I...I MUST GO... WE MUST HURRY! HELP ME. I CAN'T FIGHT HIM ALONE.
ARTHUR...?
HE'S REALLY COMING BACK...
ARTHUR.!

WHY DIDN'T ARTHUR KILL HIS PROTÉGÉ BEFORE HE DIED? THAT WOULD HAVE PREVENTED ALL OF THIS!
WHY DID HE LEAVE ME WITH NOTHING?! HE KNEW I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING BY MYSELF!

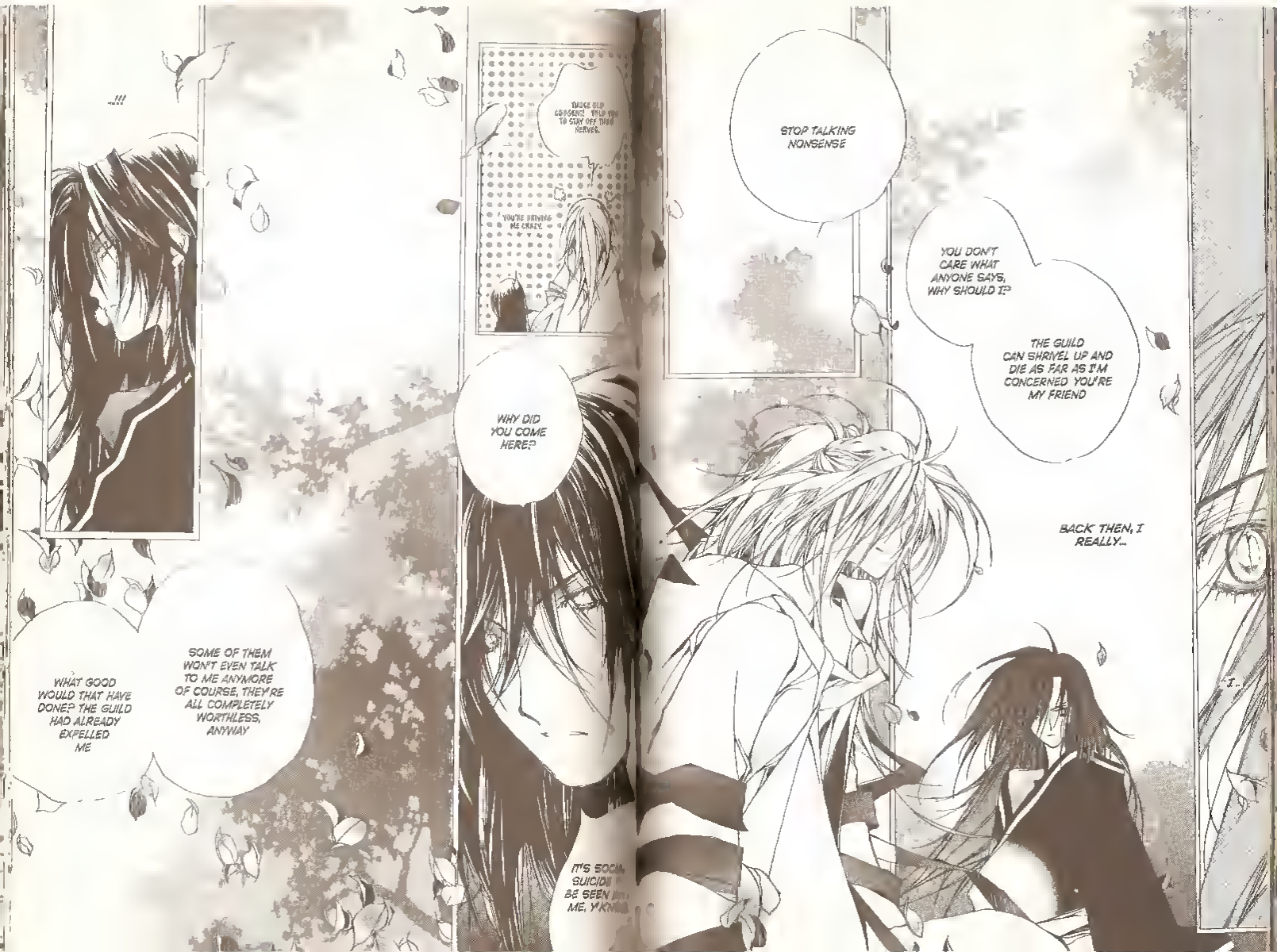

ARTHUR... AND THE SWORD MASTER OF BLACK IRON? ARTHUR SHOULD HAVE KILLED HIM!?
COULD HE HAVE MURDERED HIS FRIEND TO SAVE HIS CHILD?
ARTHUR WAS A POWERFUL WIZARD COULDN'T HE HAVE FORESEEN ALL OF THIS?
SURELY HE TOOK APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO PROTECT HIS DAUGHTER BEFORE SHUFFLING OFF
BUT...WHAT? WHAT WOULD HE HAVE DONE?

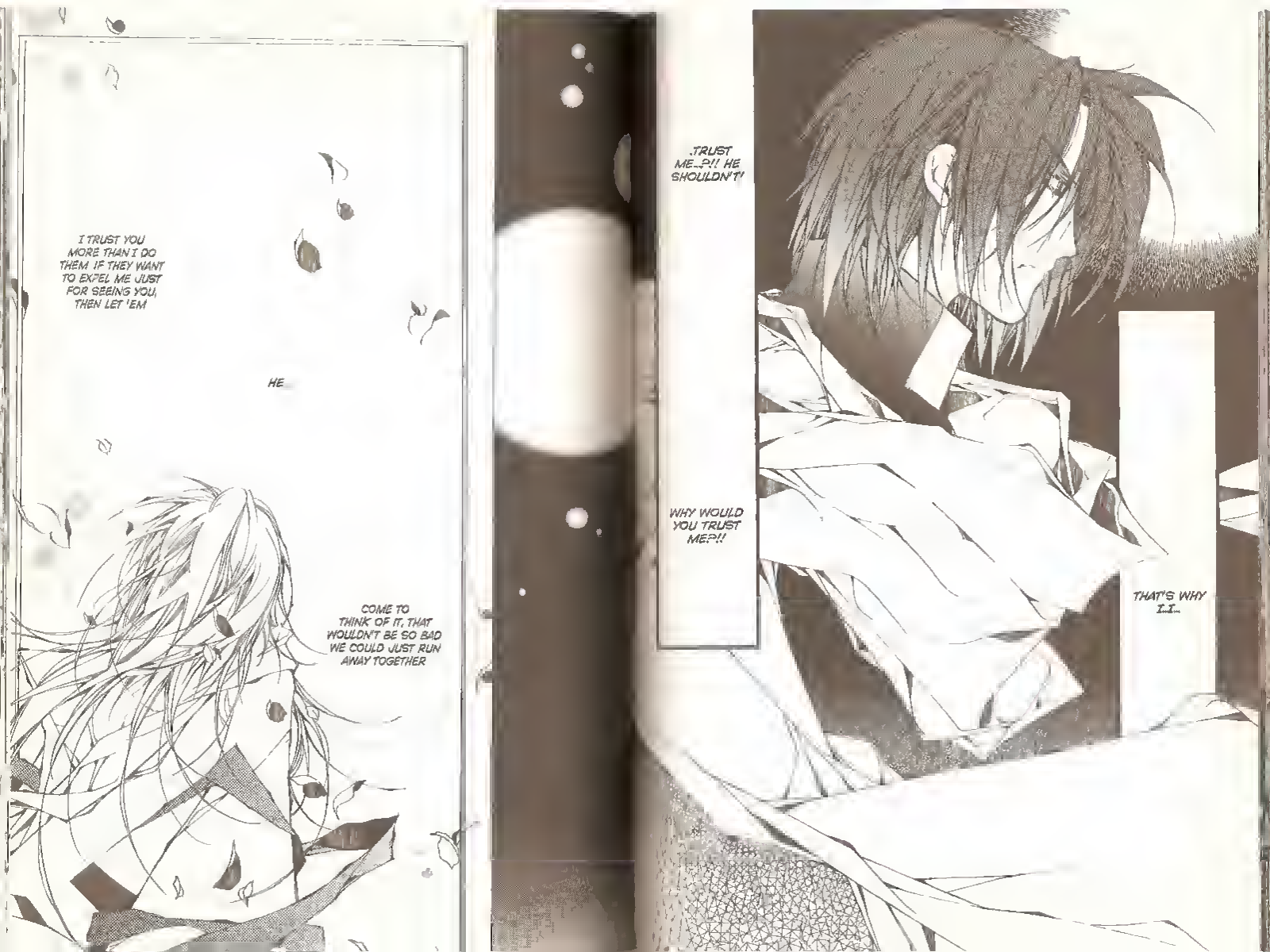
LEAVE..LEAVE ME BE..
DON'T BRING ME BACK TO LIFE
DON'T BRING YOU BACK, YOU SAY?
WHY? WHY DO I HAVE TO LISTEN TO YOU?
NO MATTER WHAT, YOU CAN'T CHANGE MY MIND, ARTHUR!
MY NAME IS RIKA
THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

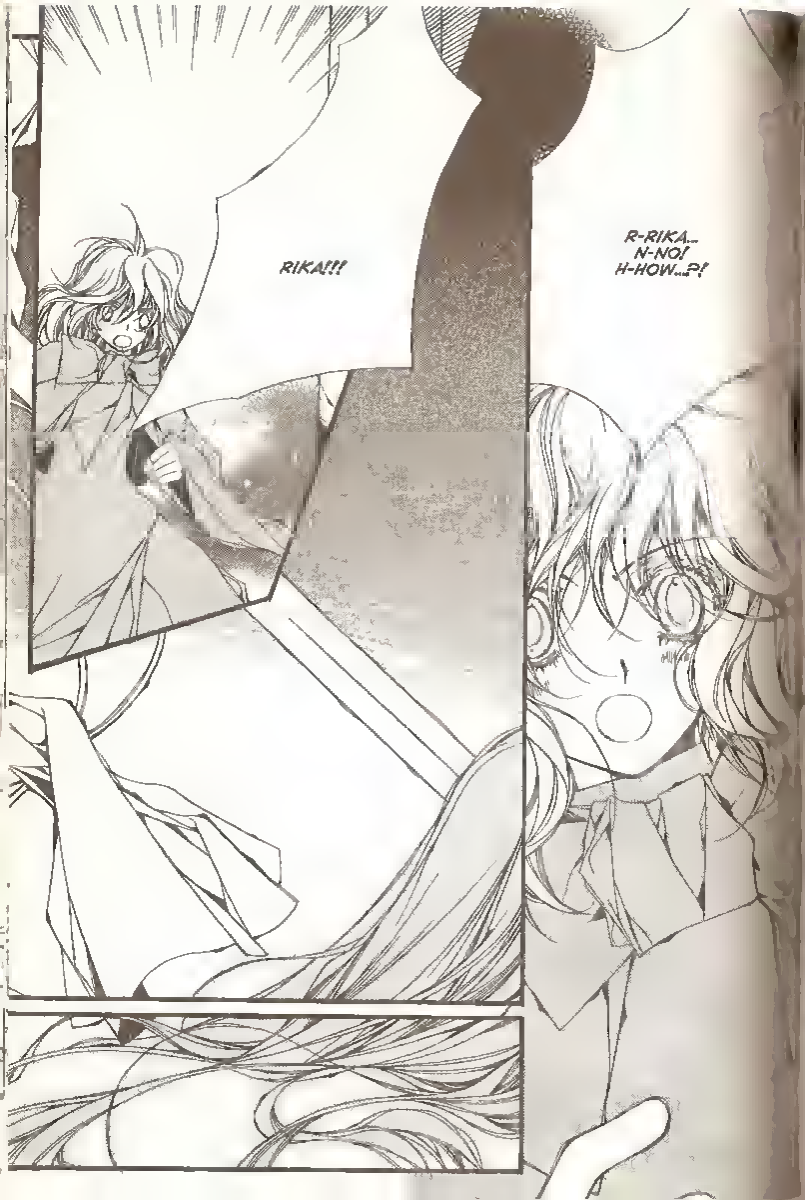

I...
ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO KILL ME?
I-I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER MY FATHER'S FACE. I DON'T WANT TO DIE FOR HIM!!
IT CAN'T BE HELPED, RIKA. IT'S WHAT I MUST DO TO SAVE ARTHUR.
THERE'S NO WAY OUT OF IT. YOU'RE HIS ONLY CHILD.
FOR ARTHUR.

ALL THOSE TIMES YOU WERE KIND TO ME...WERE THEY ALL LIES?
I TRUSTED YOU! EVERYONE WARNED ME ABOUT YOU, BUT I TRUSTED YOU ANYWAY!
NOW, NOW. YOU SHOULD KNOW HOW FOOLISH IT IS TO TRUST MERE ACTS OF KINDNESS.
I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO KILL YOU.
LOOK AT IT THIS WAY...AT LEAST YOU WON'T LIVE TO REGRET TRUSTING ME.

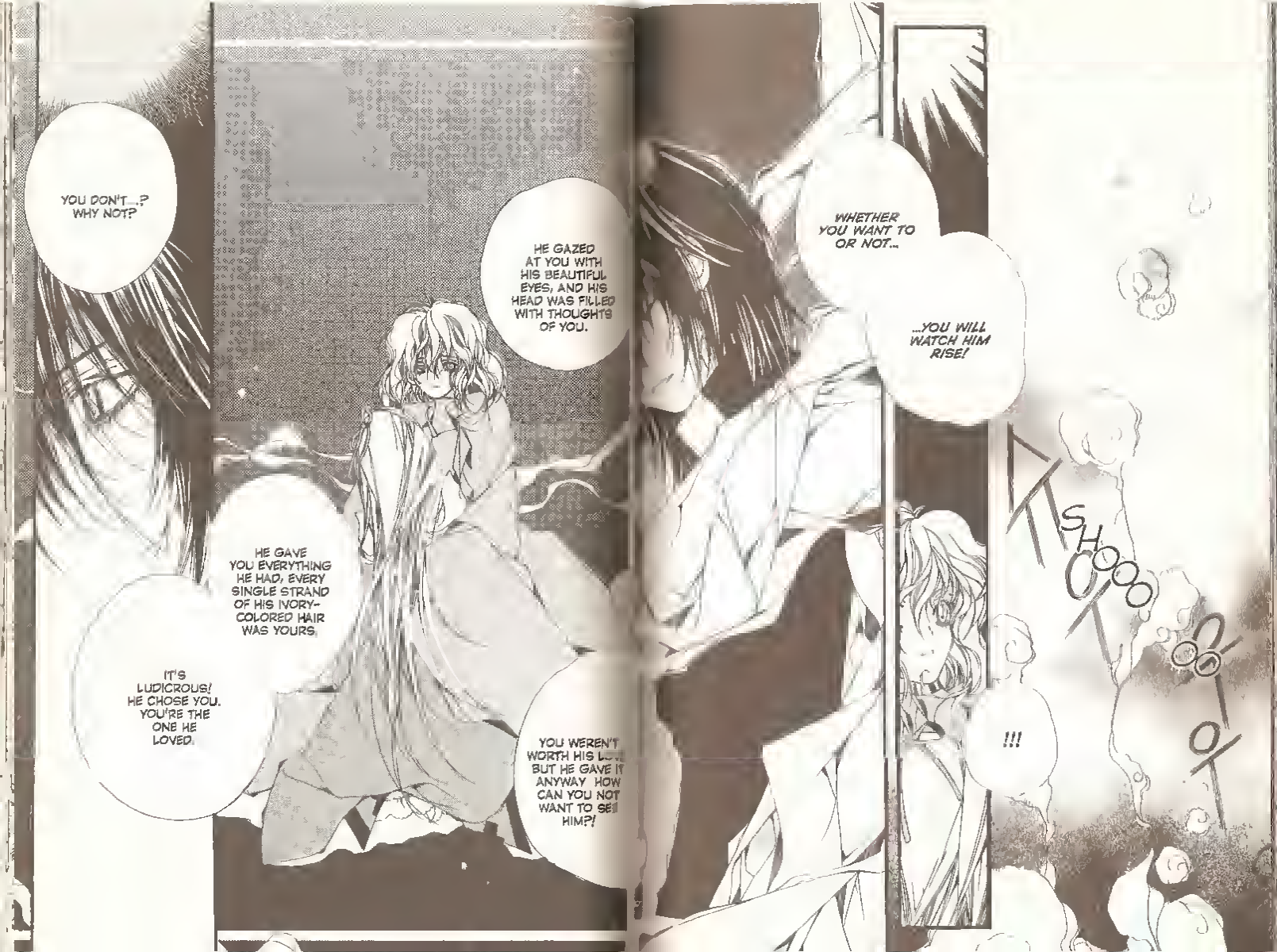
COME ON! QUIT STANDING AROUND!
OH, I'M SORRY. I...FELT SOMETHING STRANGE...
I FEEL LIKE I AM THERE.
"THERE"?
STAY ALERT, LADY. I FOLLOWED THAT YARN...BUT ARE YOU SURE IT'S THE RIGHT PLACE?
ARTHUR'S GRAVE.
EXCEPT IT'S NOT HERE. EVERYTHING LOOKS THE SAME, BUT IT'S A DIFFERENT PLACE.
HE STOLE THE CORPSE AND THEN MADE A FAKE GRAVESITE SO NO ONE WOULD NOTICE VERY CLEVER!
TO GO THROUGH THIS MUCH TROUBLE, HE'S GOT TO WANT IT BAD.
WHY IS HE SO HELL-BENT ON BRINGING ARTHUR BACK?
WHY DIDN'T YOU CONTACT ME?


...!!!
WHAT GOOD WOULD THAT HAVE DONE? THE GUILD HAD ALREADY EXPELLED ME
SOME OF THEM WON'T EVEN TALK TO ME ANYMORE OF COURSE, THEY'RE ALL COMPLETELY WORTHLESS, ANYWAY
THOSE OLD GEEZERS... TOLD YOU TO STAY OFF THEIR NERVES.
YOU'RE DRIVING ME CRAZY.
WHY DID YOU COME HERE?
IT'S SOCIAL SUICIDE TO BE SEEN WITH ME, Y'KNOW.
STOP TALKING NONSENSE
YOU DON'T CARE WHAT ANYONE SAYS, WHY SHOULD I?
THE GUILD CAN SHRIVEL UP AND DIE AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED. YOU'RE MY FRIEND
BACK THEN, I REALLY...
I...


I TRUST YOU MORE THAN I DO THEM. IF THEY WANT TO EXPEL ME JUST FOR SEEING YOU, THEN LET 'EM
HE...
COME TO THINK OF IT, THAT WOULDN'T BE SO BAD WE COULD JUST RUN AWAY TOGETHER
...TRUST ME...?!! HE SHOULDN'T!
WHY WOULD YOU TRUST ME?!!
THAT'S WHY I...


RIKA!!!
R-RIKA...
N-NO!
H-HOW...?!

LOOKS LIKE IT WASN'T YOUR TIME TO DIE JUST YET. EITHER THAT, OR I'M NOT AS POWERFUL AS I USED TO BE.
IT TOOK GUTS FOR YOU TO COME HERE TO SAVE RIKA, BUT YOU'RE TOO LATE
AREN'T YOU EXCITED TO SEE YOUR HUSBAND'S FACE AGAIN?
SHUT YOUR MOUTH! I DON'T WANT ARTHUR BACK. I DON'T WANT TO SEE HIM! I DON'T!!

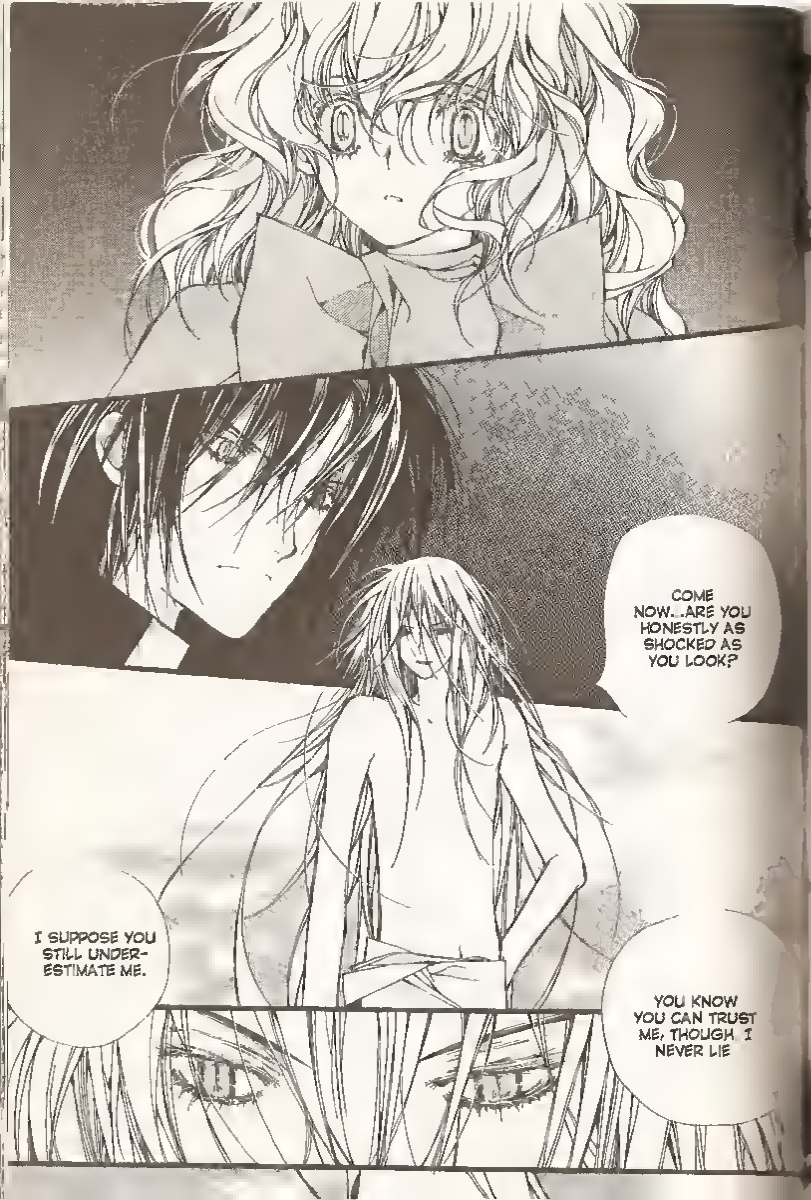

YOU DON'T...? WHY NOT?
HE GAZED AT YOU WITH HIS BEAUTIFUL EYES, AND HIS HEAD WAS FILLED WITH THOUGHTS OF YOU.
HE GAVE YOU EVERYTHING HE HAD, EVERY SINGLE STRAND OF HIS IVORY-COLORED HAIR WAS YOURS.
IT'S LUDICROUS! HE CHOSE YOU. YOU'RE THE ONE HE LOVED.
YOU WEREN'T WORTH HIS LO... BUT HE GAVE IT ANYWAY. HOW CAN YOU NOT WANT TO SE... HIM?!
WHETHER YOU WANT TO OR NOT...
...YOU WILL WATCH HIM RISE!
!!!
SHOOO
OOO

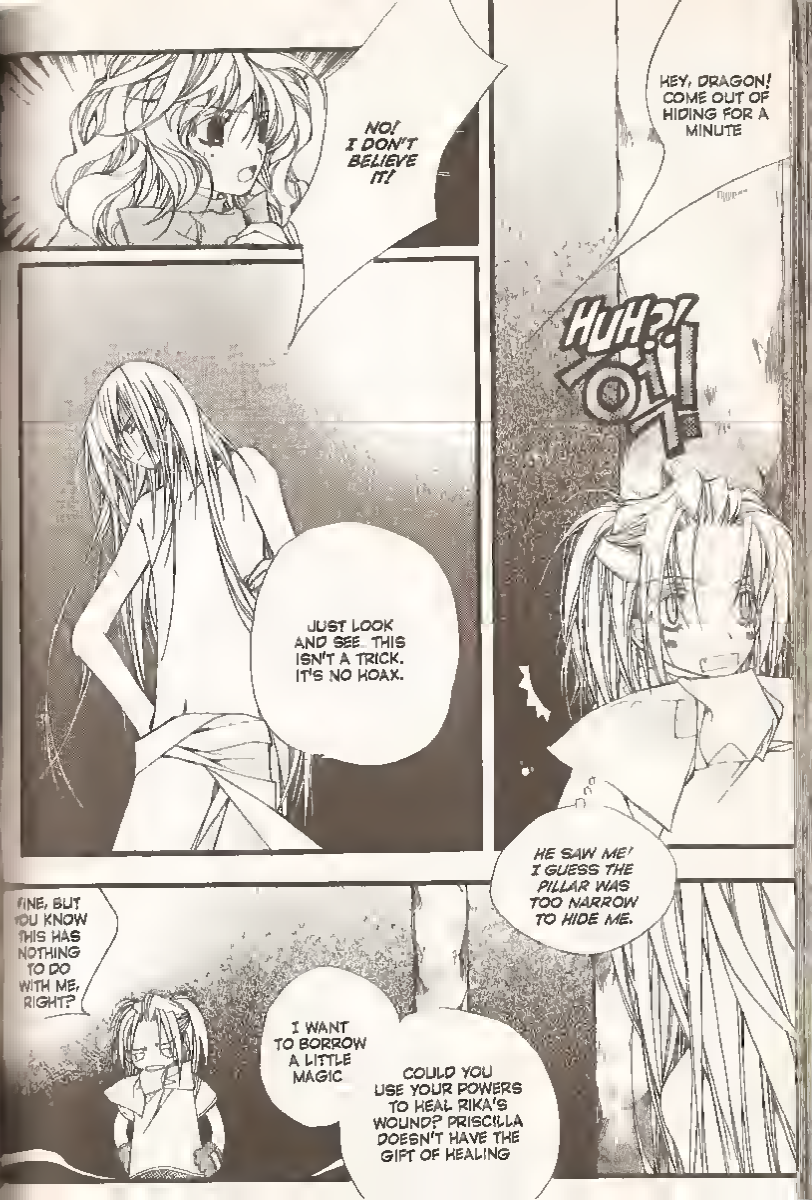
A-ARTHUR!!
HE'S RETURNED FROM THE DARK ABYSS...
ARTHUR HAS COME BACK TO ME.

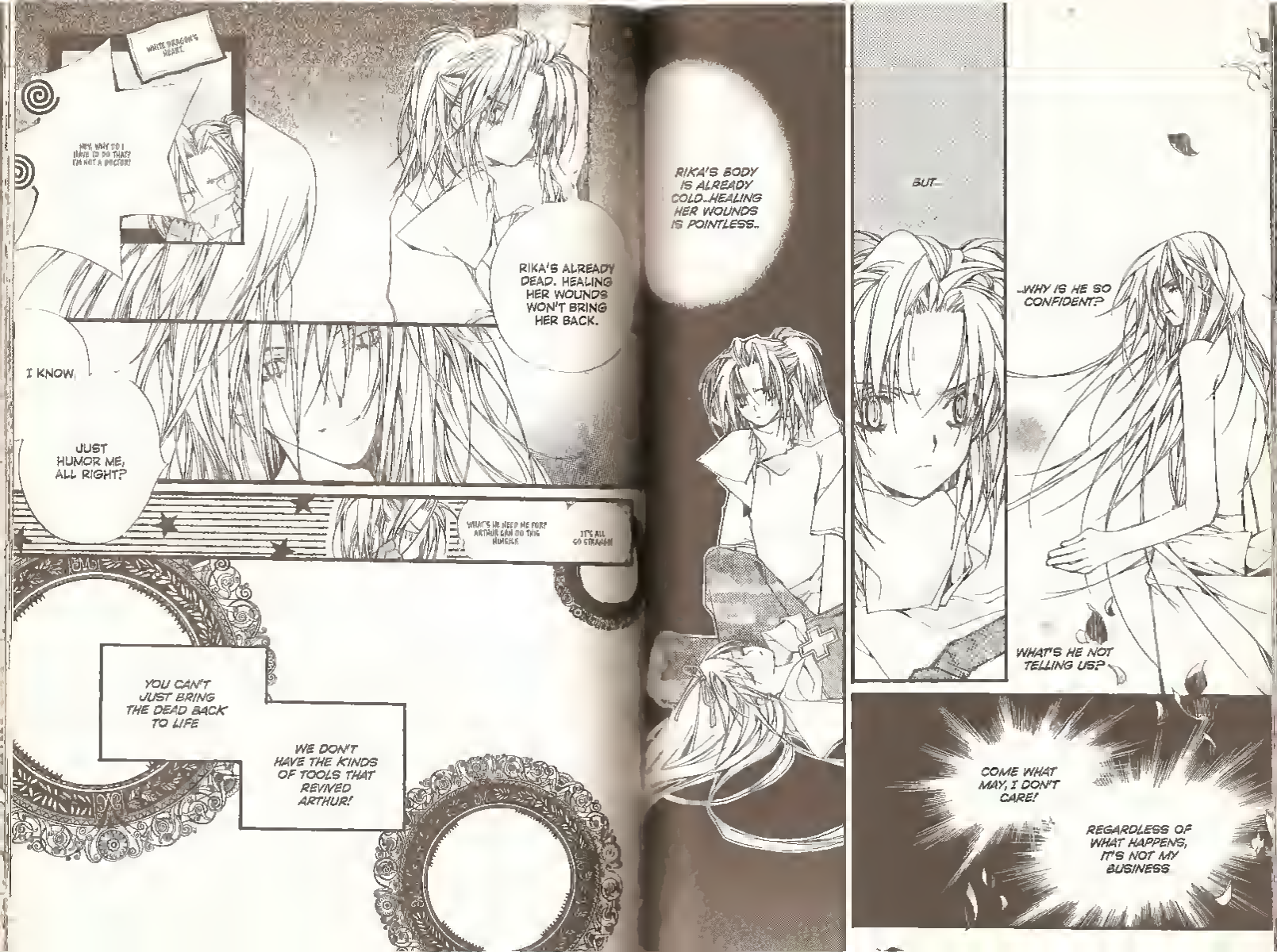
WELCOME BACK, ARTHUR
I KNOW YOU DIDN'T WANT TO BE BROUGHT BACK, BUT I WANTED YOU TO BE
I COULDN'T ALLOW YOU TO DISAPPEAR FROM MY LIFE
SILENCE!
YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED. YOU'VE ALWAYS WASTED TIME AND ENERGY ON USELESS THINGS
BEGONE.
I'VE MORE IMPORTANT MATTERS TO ATTEND TO.

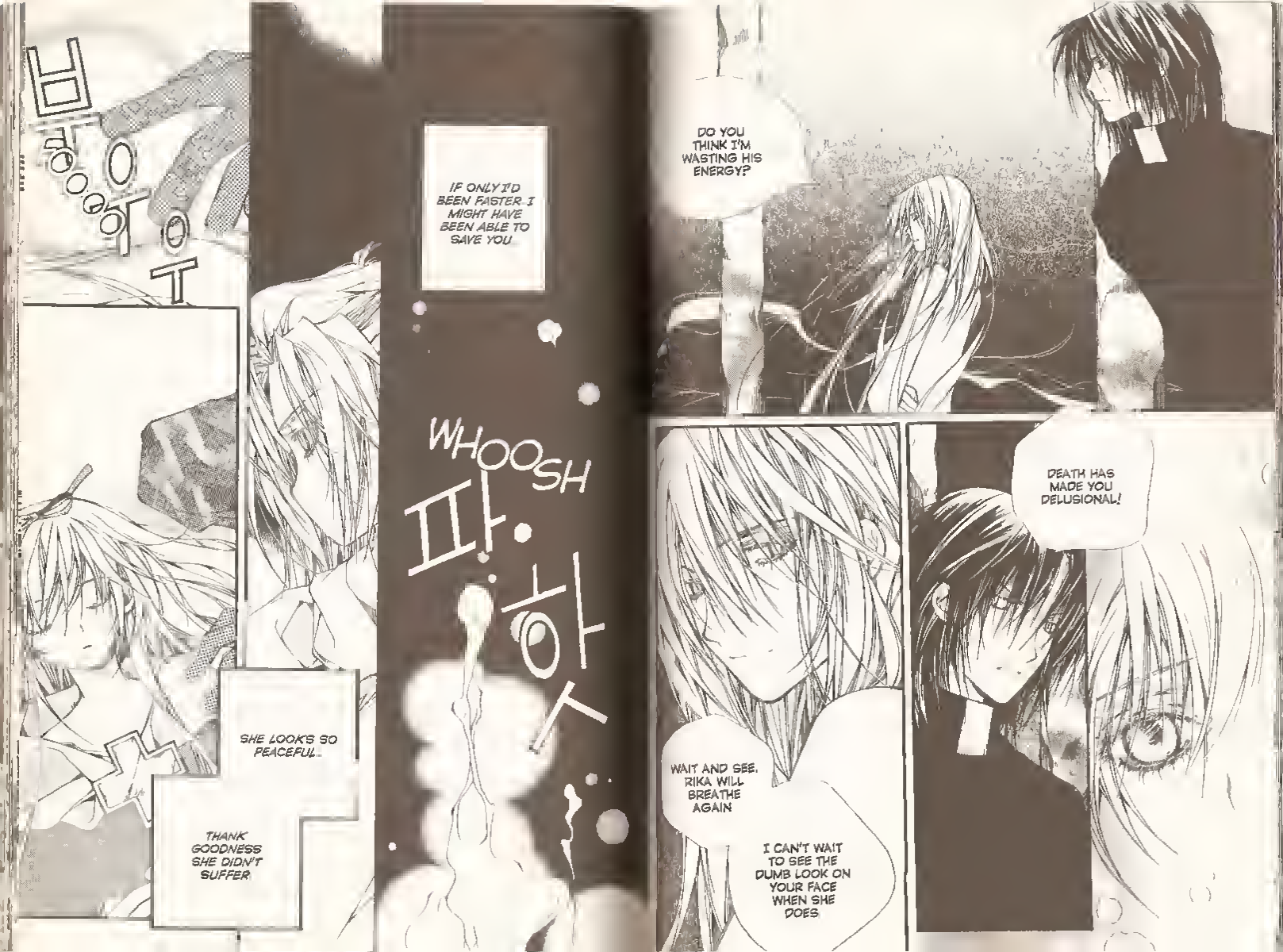
IDIOT
HOW MANY TIMES DID I TELL YOU TO LET ME REST? YOU DIDN'T LISTEN AT ALL!!
PRISCILLA...
HOW'S RIKA?
HOW COULD YOU KILL AN INNOCENT CHILD SO BLISSFULLY UNAWARE OF THE WORLD?
.....
DON'T COME ANY CLOSER!
DON'T EVEN TALK TO ME! I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOUR FACE!
YOU WON'T EVEN LOOK AT MY FACE? YOU'VE GROWN CRUEL.
NO, I'VE MISSED YOU SO MUCH...
WHY DIDN'T YOU STAY DEAD?!
...MY HEART WILL MELT IF I LOOK AT YOU.
IF I GAZE UPON YOUR FACE, I WON'T BE ABLE TO LET YOU GO AGAIN.

I'M NO BETTER THAN THE SWORD MASTER OF BLACK IRON I'VE DREAMT SO MANY TIMES ABOUT HAVING YOU BACK EVEN IF IT MEANT SACRIFICING RIKA
IT DIDN'T MATTER HOW WRONG I KNEW THAT TO BE.
I HAVE NO RIGHT TO CALL MYSELF A MOTHER.
MAYBE THAT'S WHY I HAD TO LEAVE RIKA WITH LOUIS.
I'VE NEVER EVEN LIFTED A FINGER TO HELP OUR CHILD
WE'VE MADE A MESS OF EVERYTHING... WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO NOW?!
IT'S OKAY YOU DON'T HAVE TO TORTURE YOURSELF ANYMORE
RIKA IS NOT DEAD.
OUR CHILD... SHE'LL SURVIVE THIS

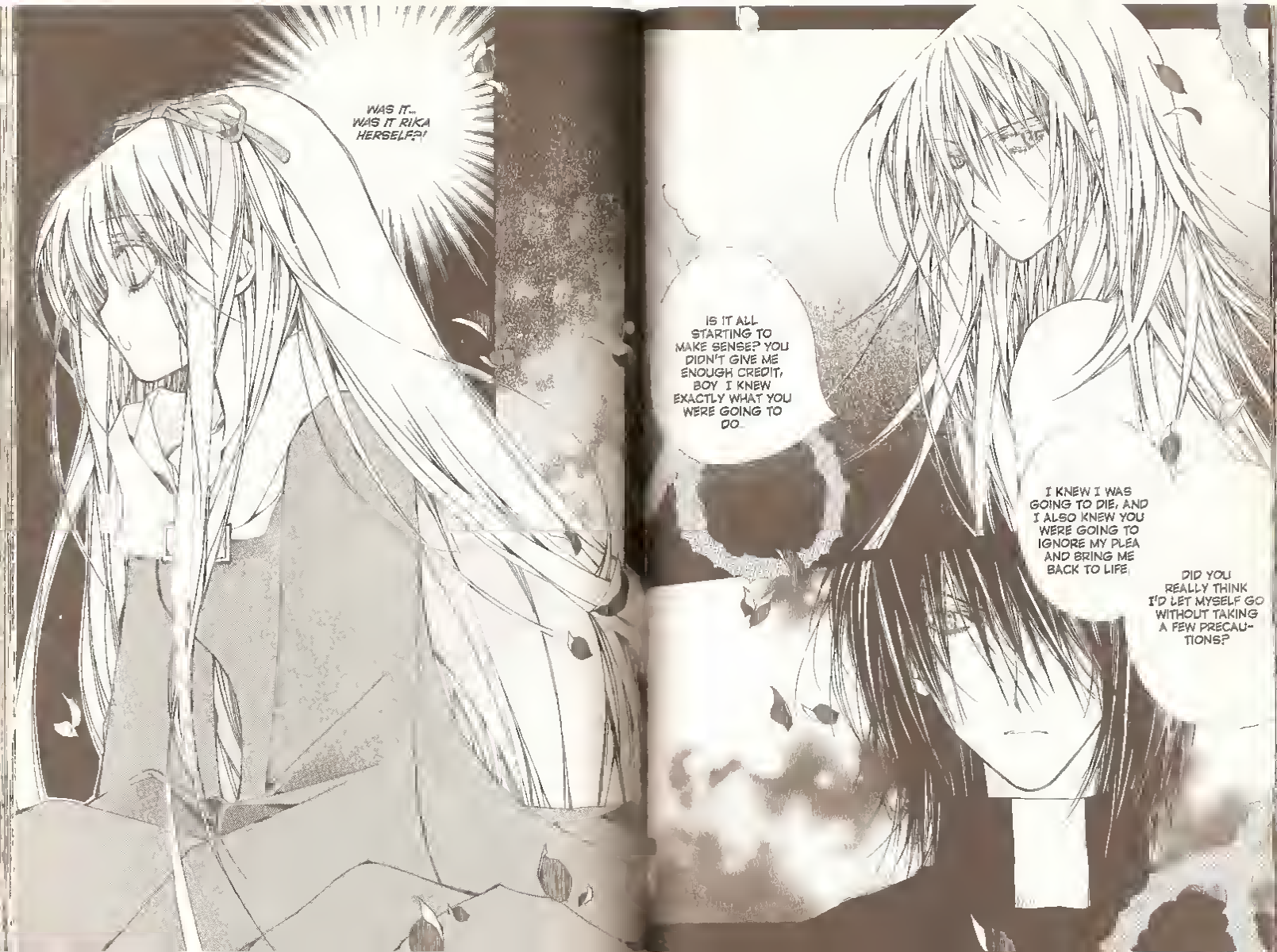

COME NOW...ARE YOU HONESTLY AS SHOCKED AS YOU LOOK?
I SUPPOSE YOU STILL UNDER-ESTIMATE ME.
YOU KNOW YOU CAN TRUST ME, THOUGH. I NEVER LIE


NO! I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
JUST LOOK AND SEE. THIS ISN'T A TRICK. IT'S NO HOAX.
HEY, DRAGON! COME OUT OF HIDING FOR A MINUTE
HUH?! EH?!
HE SAW ME! I GUESS THE PILLAR WAS TOO NARROW TO HIDE ME.
FINE, BUT YOU KNOW THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ME, RIGHT?
I WANT TO BORROW A LITTLE MAGIC
COULD YOU USE YOUR POWERS TO HEAL RIKA'S WOUND? PRISCILLA DOESN'T HAVE THE GIFT OF HEALING


WHERE DRAGON'S HEART
AWW, WHY DO I HAVE TO DO THIS? I'M NOT A DOCTOR!
RIKA'S ALREADY DEAD. HEALING HER WOUNDS WON'T BRING HER BACK.
I KNOW.
JUST HUMOR ME, ALL RIGHT?
WHAT'S IN NEED ME FOR? ARTHUR CAN DO THIS HIMSELF
IT'S ALL SO STRANGE
YOU CAN'T JUST BRING THE DEAD BACK TO LIFE
WE DON'T HAVE THE KINDS OF TOOLS THAT REVIVED ARTHUR!
RIKA'S BODY IS ALREADY COLD..HEALING HER WOUNDS IS POINTLESS..
BUT...
..WHY IS HE SO CONFIDENT?
WHAT'S HE NOT TELLING US?
COME WHAT MAY, I DON'T CARE!
REGARDLESS OF WHAT HAPPENS, IT'S NOT MY BUSINESS


SHE LOOKS SO PEACEFUL...
THANK GOODNESS SHE DIDN'T SUFFER
IF ONLY I'D BEEN FASTER. I MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SAVE YOU.
WHOOSH
DO YOU THINK I'M WASTING HIS ENERGY?
WAIT AND SEE. RIKA WILL BREATHE AGAIN
I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THE DUMB LOOK ON YOUR FACE WHEN SHE DOES.
DEATH HAS MADE YOU DELUSIONAL!

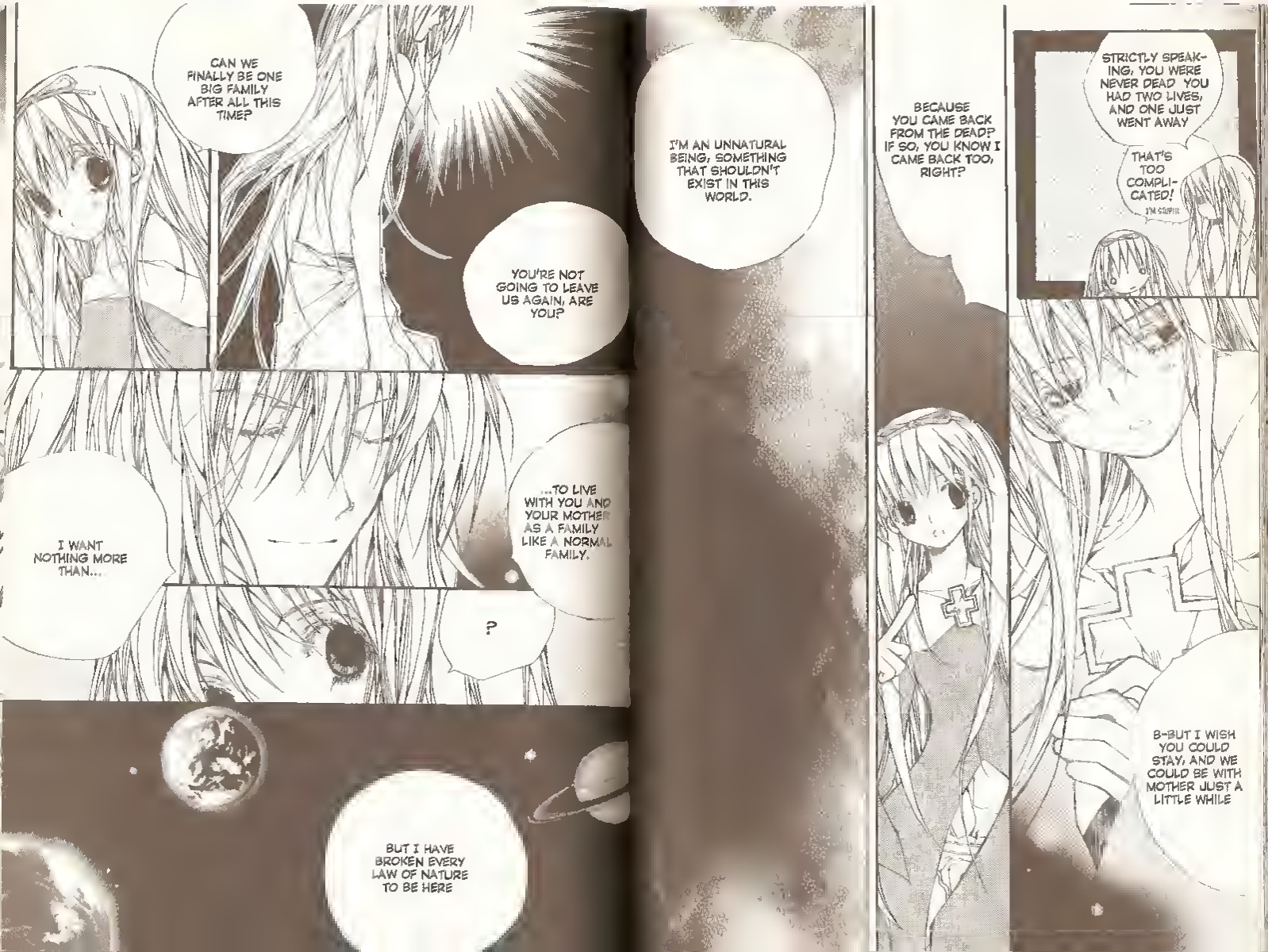
UMM...? WHITE DRAGON?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
SHE'S ALIVE!!!
IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE!
RIKA!
OH! HUH?
000
IS THAT YOU, RIKA? IS IT REALLY YOU?!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT...
WHAT DID YOU DO, ARTHUR?
HOW COULD HE DO ANYTHING? HE JUST STOOD THERE.

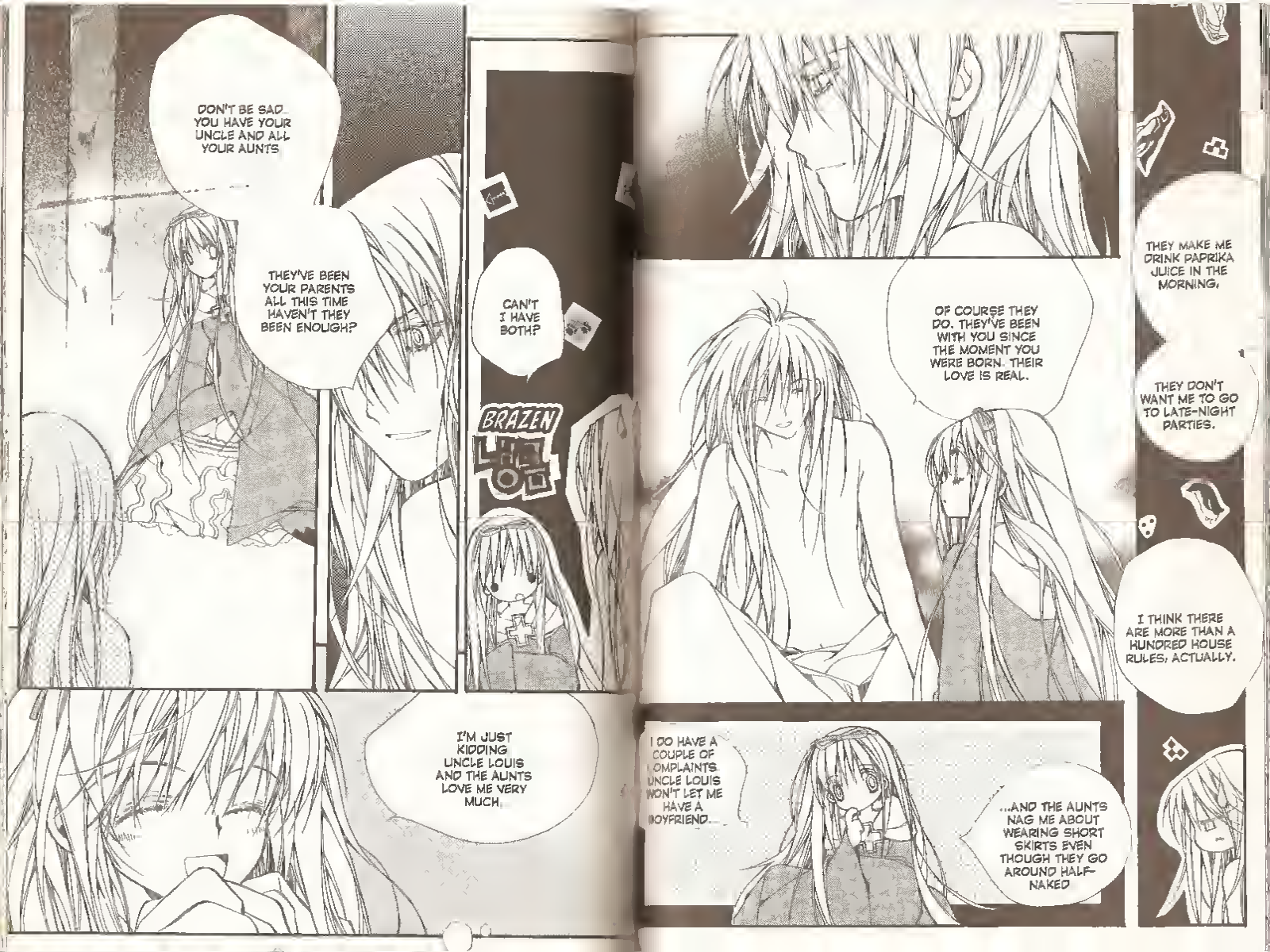

WAS IT... WAS IT RIKA HERSELF?!
IS IT ALL STARTING TO MAKE SENSE? YOU DIDN'T GIVE ME ENOUGH CREDIT, BOY. I KNEW EXACTLY WHAT YOU WERE GOING TO DO.
I KNEW I WAS GOING TO DIE, AND I ALSO KNEW YOU WERE GOING TO IGNORE MY PLEA AND BRING ME BACK TO LIFE.
DID YOU REALLY THINK I'D LET MYSELF GO WITHOUT TAKING A FEW PRECAUTIONS?

DID YOU REALLY THINK A DAUGHTER OF MINE WOULD BE AN ORDINARY WIZARD WITH AVERAGE POWERS?
EVEN AFTER I TRANSFERRED ALL OF MY POWERS TO HER UNTIL I HAD NOTHING MORE TO GIVE?
ALL THOSE POWERS WERE MAINTAINING HER "ANOTHER LIFE".

SHE'S MY MASTERPIECE. I POURED EVERYTHING I HAD INTO HER
...!!
IT'S THE ULTIMATE IN PATERNAL LOVE.
ALL LIVING THINGS DESIRE TO LEAVE THEIR ESSENCE BEHIND WHEN THEY DIE.
THE ONLY WNSIDE I'M NOW WERLESS.
MY LITTLE GAMBIT HAS LEFT ME UTTERLY DEFENSELESS
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY'RE SAYING.
EVERYTHING HAS GONE TOPSY-TURVY.
EXCUSE ME.
WASN'T I DEAD A MOMENT AGO?

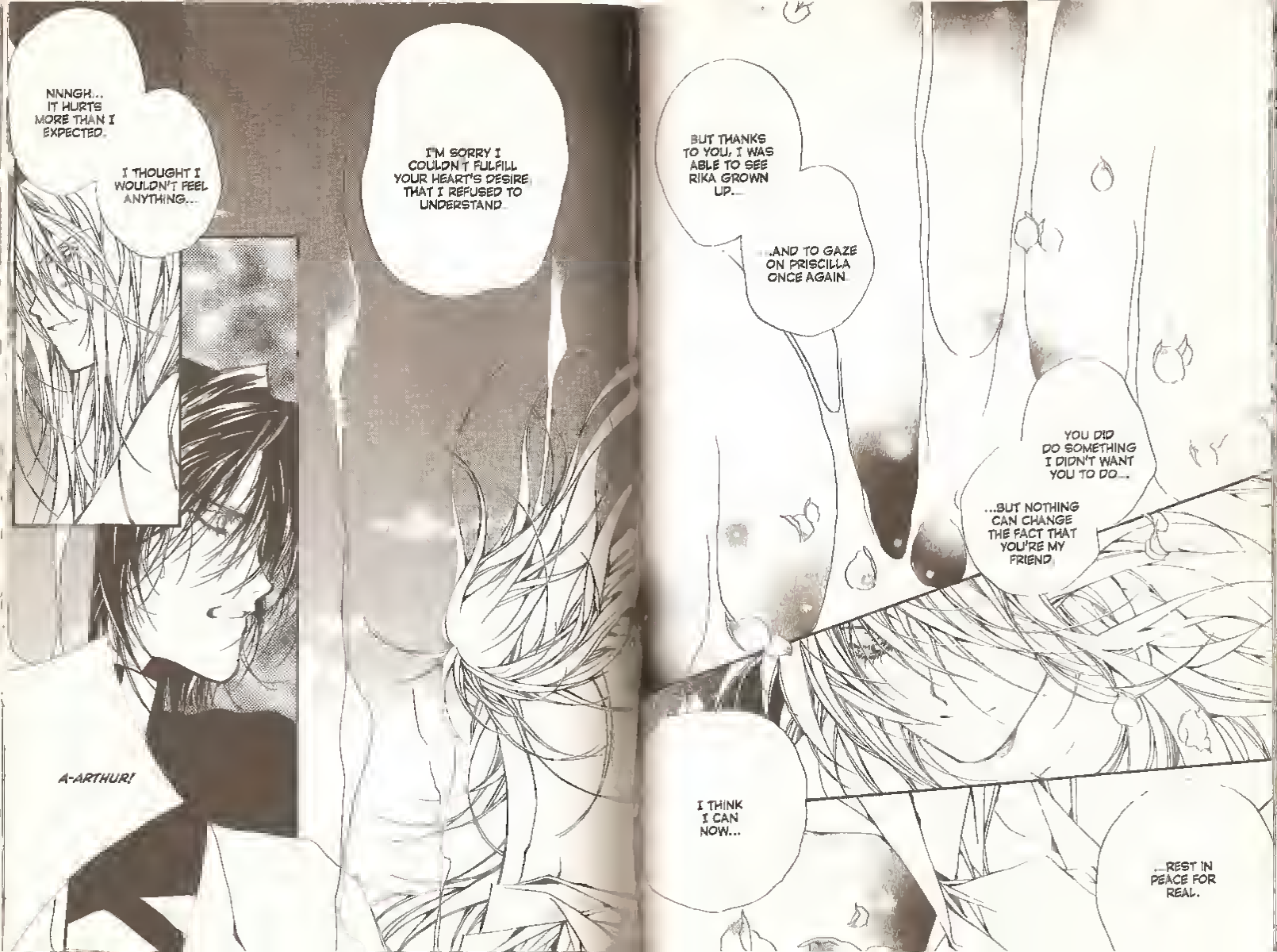
YES, YOU WERE.
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME, RIKA. YOU WERE JUST A BABY WHEN I LAST SAW YOU
NOW YOU'RE SO BIG, I CAN'T EVEN HOLD YOU.
WAIT A MINUTE...THIS MAN IS MY FATHER? IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
WHAT RIKA IS THINKING
LIAR!
WHAT HE THINKS RIKA IS THINKING
AH!! THAT'S RIGHT!!
SPARKLE
I'VE ACHIEVED EVERY LITTLE GIRL'S DREAM! I HAVE A YOUNG AND HANDSOME FATHER!
WHAT HAS LOUIS BEEN TEACHING YOU?
ANGRY
SPARKLE
ER... RIKA?
MY EVERY FANTASY HAS COME TRUE!
ARE YOU GOING TO LIVE WITH US NOW?


CAN WE FINALLY BE ONE BIG FAMILY AFTER ALL THIS TIME?
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LEAVE US AGAIN, ARE YOU?
I'M AN UNNATURAL BEING, SOMETHING THAT SHOULDN'T EXIST IN THIS WORLD.
I WANT NOTHING MORE THAN...
...TO LIVE WITH YOU AND YOUR MOTHER AS A FAMILY LIKE A NORMAL FAMILY.
?
BUT I HAVE BROKEN EVERY LAW OF NATURE TO BE HERE
BECAUSE YOU CAME BACK FROM THE DEAD? IF SO, YOU KNOW I CAME BACK TOO, RIGHT?
STRICTLY SPEAKING, YOU WERE NEVER DEAD YOU HAD TWO LIVES, AND ONE JUST WENT AWAY
THAT'S TOO COMPLICATED!
B-BUT I WISH YOU COULD STAY, AND WE COULD BE WITH MOTHER JUST A LITTLE WHILE


DON'T BE SAD. YOU HAVE YOUR UNCLE AND ALL YOUR AUNTS
THEY'VE BEEN YOUR PARENTS ALL THIS TIME HAVEN'T THEY BEEN ENOUGH?
CAN'T I HAVE BOTH?
BRAZEN
I'M JUST KIDDING UNCLE LOUIS AND THE AUNTS LOVE ME VERY MUCH.
OF COURSE THEY DO. THEY'VE BEEN WITH YOU SINCE THE MOMENT YOU WERE BORN. THEIR LOVE IS REAL.
THEY MAKE ME DRINK PAPRIKA JUICE IN THE MORNING.
THEY DON'T WANT ME TO GO TO LATE-NIGHT PARTIES.
I THINK THERE ARE MORE THAN A HUNDRED HOUSE RULES, ACTUALLY.
I DO HAVE A COUPLE OF COMPLAINTS UNCLE LOUIS WON'T LET ME HAVE A BOYFRIEND...
...AND THE AUNTS NAG ME ABOUT WEARING SHORT SKIRTS EVEN THOUGH THEY GO AROUND HALF-NAKED

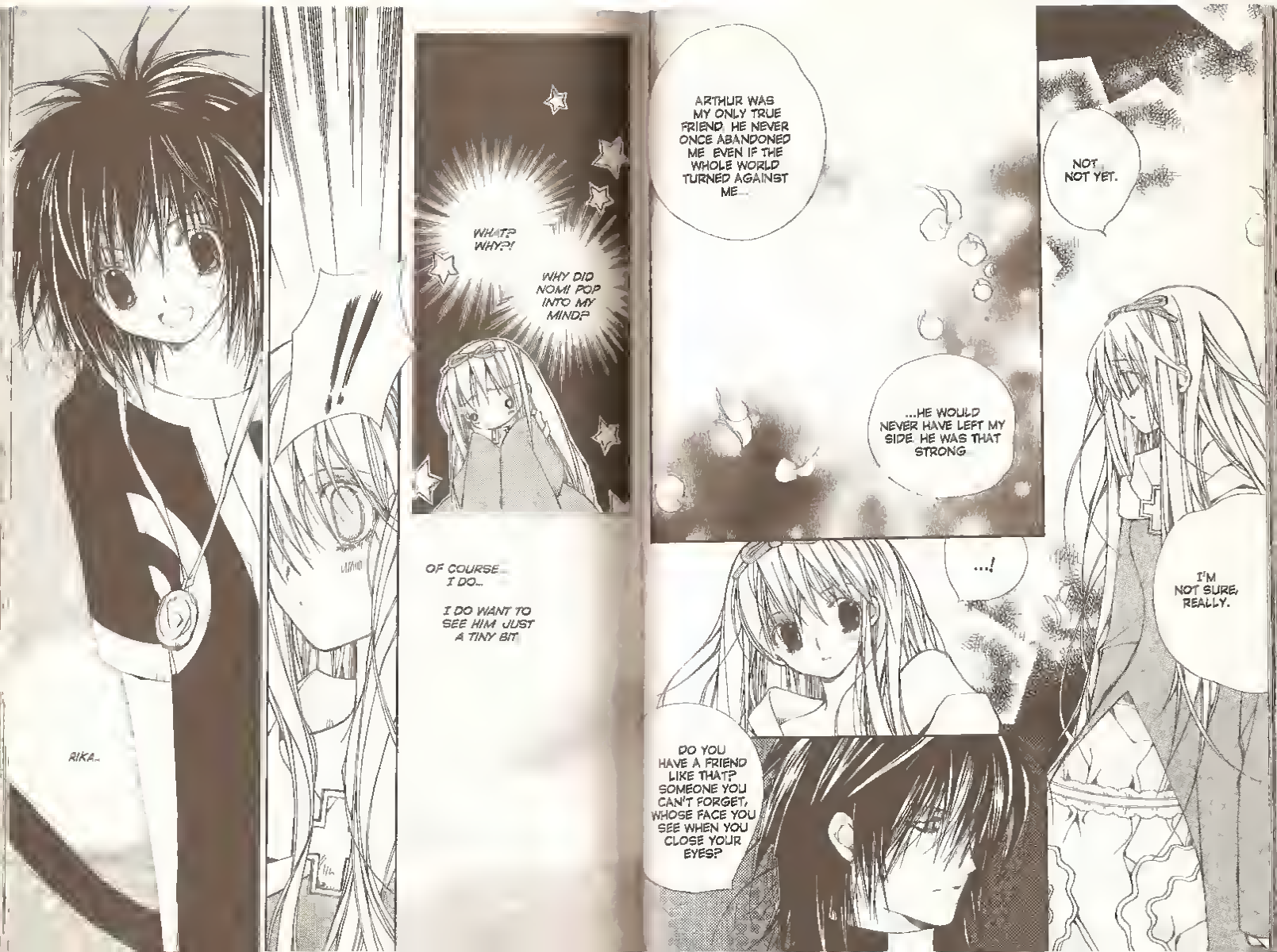
BUT I GUESS THAT'S JUST PROOF OF HOW MUCH THEY CARE
I'M REALLY GRATEFUL THAT THEY TOOK CARE OF ME ALL THIS TIME
I'M THE ONE WHO SHOULD BE GRATEFUL. THEY'VE WATCHED OVER YOU WITH AMAZING VIGILANCE
I'M REALLY SORRY THAT I CAN'T VISIT WITH EVERYONE.
I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF TIME
PRISCILLA ..
YES.
YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT WITHOUT ME, WON'T YOU? I WORRY MORE ABOUT YOU THAN I DO RIKA
I WON'T CRY THIS TIME
EVEN IF I NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN, I WON'T CRY, ARTHUR

I DIED ONCE.
I DON'T WANT A SHAMEFUL EXISTENCE CLINGING TO MY LIFELESS BODY
LET ME BE ON MY WAY
WE MUST BE APART ONCE AND FOR ALL.
SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO? DIE AGAIN?!
IT'S EASY TO DIE. EASIER THAN YOU KNOW.
ESPECIALLY IF I OWE MY SECOND LIFE TO THE MURIKA STONE
SLAP
PHA-PAWT

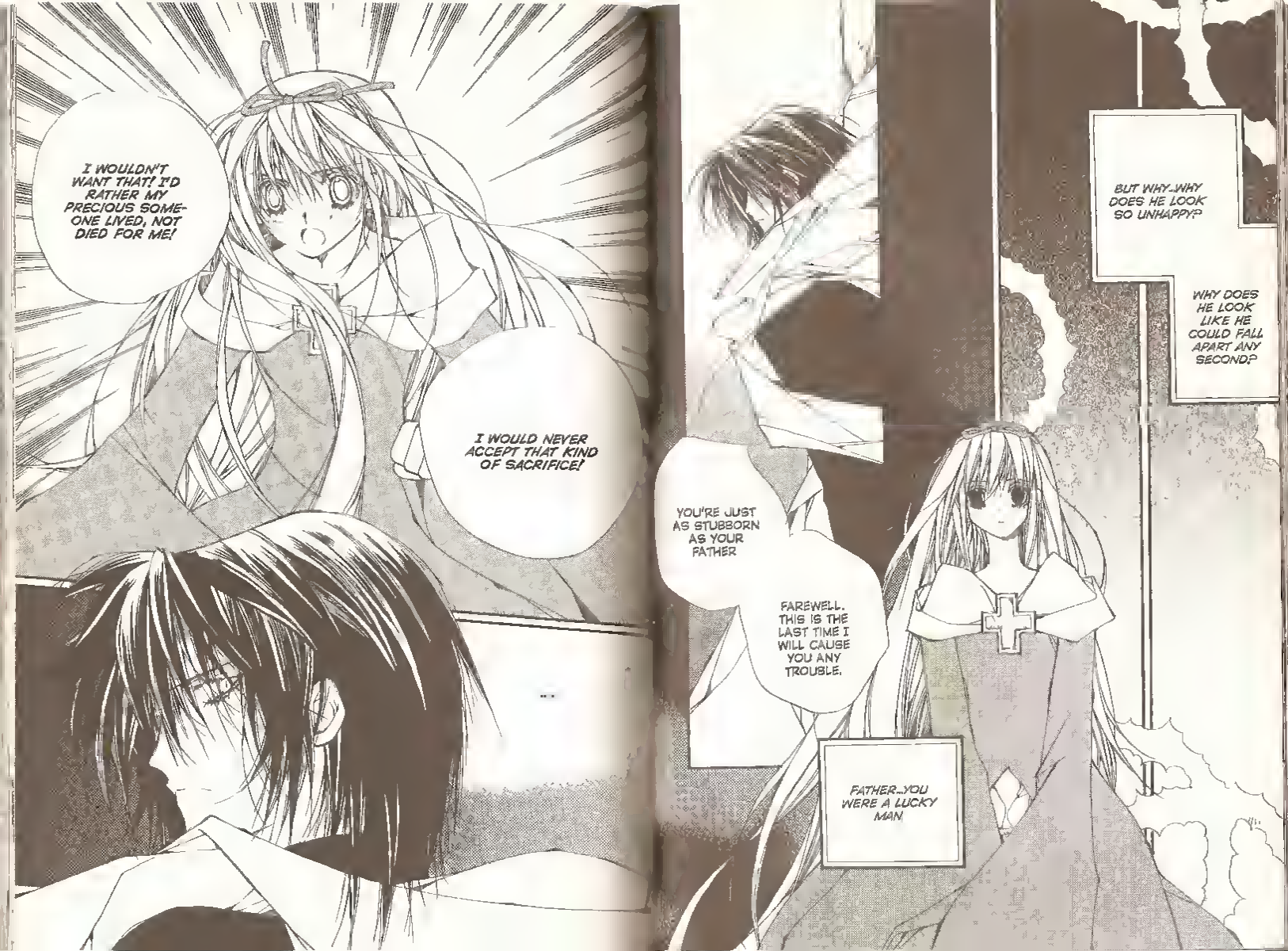

NNNGH... IT HURTS MORE THAN I EXPECTED.
I THOUGHT I WOULDN'T FEEL ANYTHING...
I'M SORRY I COULDN'T FULFILL YOUR HEART'S DESIRE THAT I REFUSED TO UNDERSTAND.
A-ARTHUR!
BUT THANKS TO YOU, I WAS ABLE TO SEE RIKA GROWN UP...
...AND TO GAZE ON PRISCILLA ONCE AGAIN.
YOU DID DO SOMETHING I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO DO...
...BUT NOTHING CAN CHANGE THE FACT THAT YOU'RE MY FRIEND.
I THINK I CAN NOW...
...REST IN PEACE FOR REAL.

HE JUST VANISHED. RIKA WASN'T EVEN GIVEN A CHANCE TO EXPERIENCE GRIEF.
RIKA'S FATHER LEFT HER AGAIN...JUST LIKE THAT. GONE TO A PLACE FROM WHICH HE CAN NEVER RETURN.
LIKE A FALLING FLOWER...

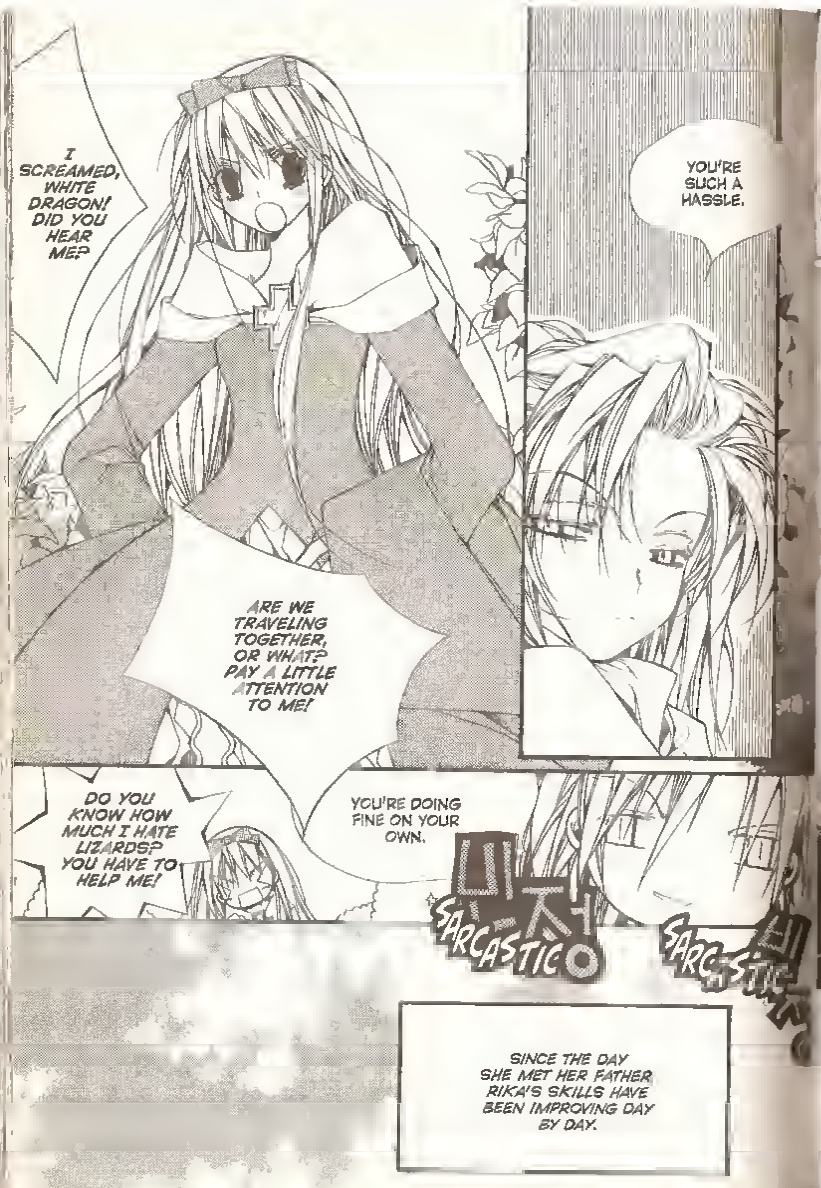
HOW COULD YOU DO THIS TO ME? IT TOOK ME SO LONG TO BRING YOU BACK, AND NOW...
YOU'RE GONE FOREVER?!
I'LL NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN?!
HE REALLY...
...REALLY...
BOTH OF THEM REALLY LOVED MY FATHER AND WANTED HIM BACK
WILL I EVER MEET SOMEONE I CAN LOVE LIKE THAT?


RIKA...
!!
WHAT? WHY?!
WHY DID NOMI POP INTO MY MIND?
OF COURSE... I DO...
I DO WANT TO SEE HIM JUST A TINY BIT.
ARTHUR WAS MY ONLY TRUE FRIEND. HE NEVER ONCE ABANDONED ME. EVEN IF THE WHOLE WORLD TURNED AGAINST ME...
...HE WOULD NEVER HAVE LEFT MY SIDE. HE WAS THAT STRONG.
NOT. NOT YET.
...!
DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND LIKE THAT? SOMEONE YOU CAN'T FORGET, WHOSE FACE YOU SEE WHEN YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES?
I'M NOT SURE, REALLY.

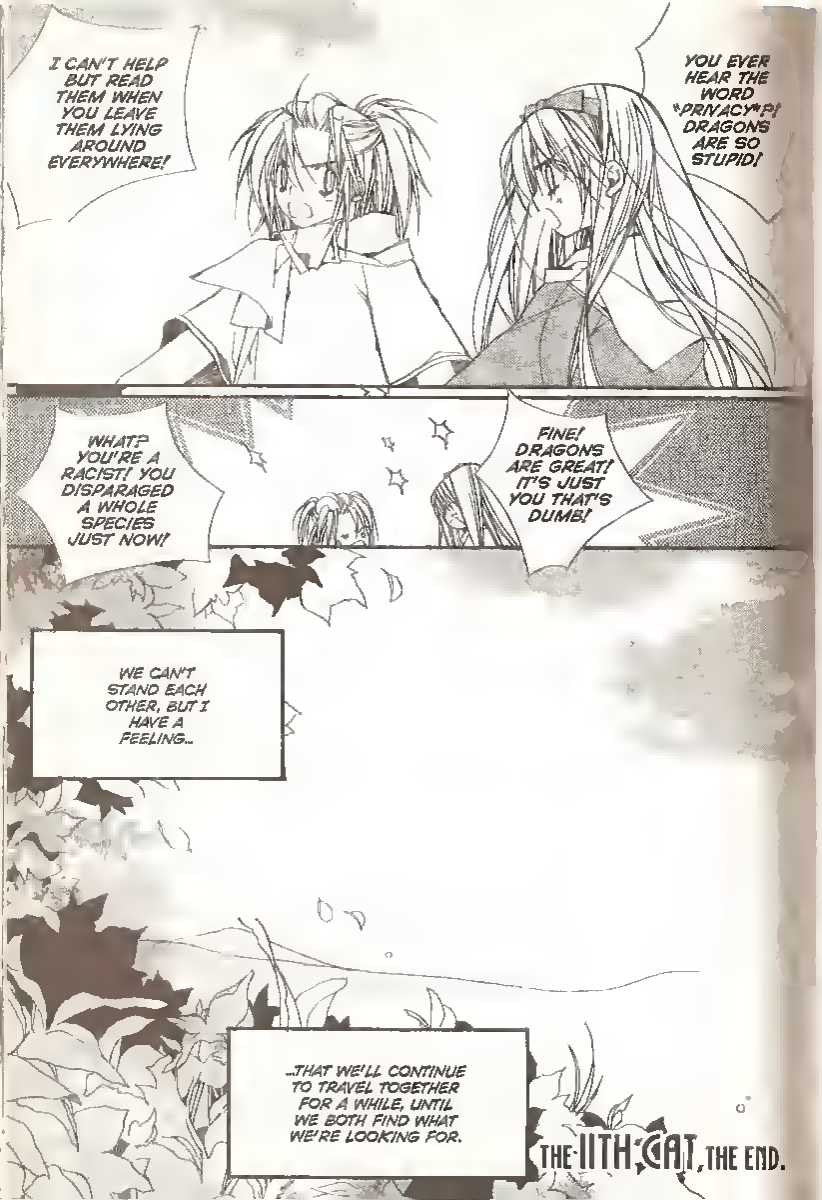
I'M TOO YOUNG TO KNOW POSITIVELY, BUT I THINK I'LL LEARN IN TIME
EVERYONE I MEET, EVERYTHING I EXPERIENCE, IS A PART OF LEARNING ABOUT LOVE.
I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT ONE DAY I'LL MEET SOMEONE I CAN TRUST ABSO-LUTELY.
IF YOU DO, DON'T EVER LET HIM GO.
SEPARATING FROM HIM WILL BE THE GREATEST SORROW YOU'LL EVER EXPERIENCE IN LIFE.
A PAIN YOU CAN NEITHER FORGET NOR EASE, AN EMPTY HOLE NO ONE ELSE CAN FILL.
IT FEELS AS IF A PART OF YOU HAS BEEN ERASED.
I WOULD HAVE GLADLY TRADED MY LIFE FOR ARTHUR'S

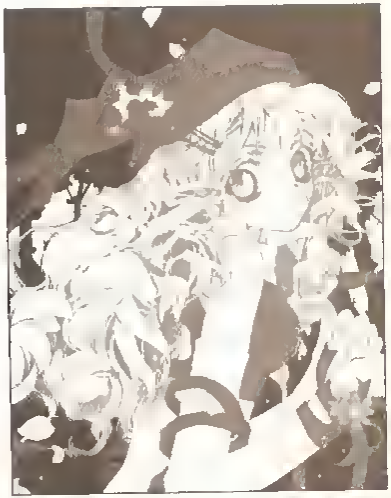

I WOULDN'T WANT THAT! I'D RATHER MY PRECIOUS SOMEONE LIVED, NOT DIED FOR ME!
I WOULD NEVER ACCEPT THAT KIND OF SACRIFICE!
...
BUT WHY...WHY DOES HE LOOK SO UNHAPPY?
WHY DOES HE LOOK LIKE HE COULD FALL APART ANY SECOND?
YOU'RE JUST AS STUBBORN AS YOUR FATHER
FAREWELL. THIS IS THE LAST TIME I WILL CAUSE YOU ANY TROUBLE.
FATHER...YOU WERE A LUCKY MAN

SOMEDAY..
SOMEDAY I'LL MEET SOMEONE I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT...
...AND I'LL FIND HAPPINESS WITH HIM.
RIKA'S MOTHER WENT TO VISIT WITH RIKA'S AUNTS.
SHE SAID SHE'D RETURN SOON, BUT THERE'S NO NEED.
CRUNCH
AAAACHH!
AAAAACH
YIKES! WHAT AN UNPLEASANT SCREAM...
I BET IT'S EVEN FREAKING OUT THE PERSON DOING THE SCREAMING
AAAAACH


I SCREAMED, WHITE DRAGON! DID YOU HEAR ME?
YOU'RE SUCH A HASSLE.
ARE WE TRAVELING TOGETHER, OR WHAT? PAY A LITTLE ATTENTION TO ME!
DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I HATE LIZARDS? YOU HAVE TO HELP ME!
YOU'RE DOING FINE ON YOUR OWN.
SARCASTIC
SARCASTIC
SINCE THE DAY SHE MET HER FATHER RIKA'S SKILLS HAVE BEEN IMPROVING DAY BY DAY.

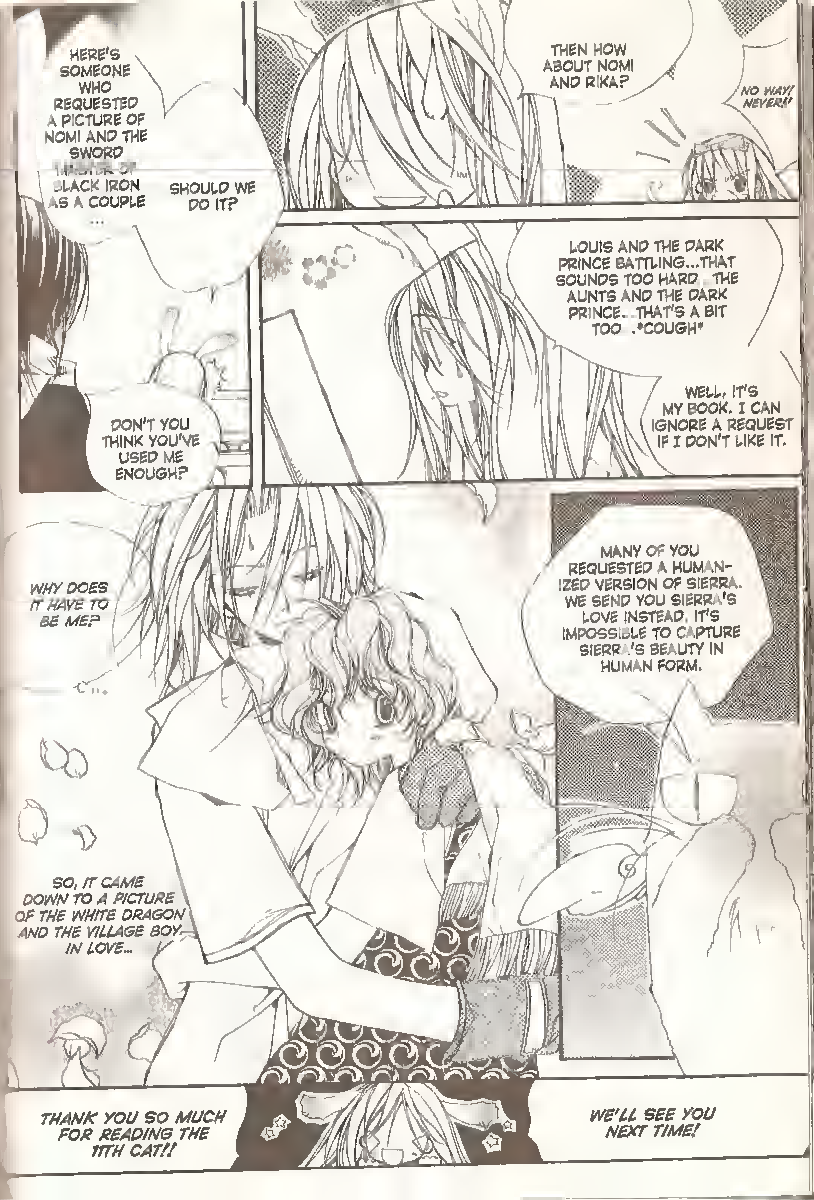
I'VE KEPT UP MY HUNT FOR EXOTIC PLANTS...
...?
...WHILE RIKA BUILDS POWER SO SHE CAN GET NOMI BACK.
CRACK
YOUUUU---!
YOU PEEPED INTO MY MIND AGAIN! HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU TO STAY OUT?!
MAYBE YOU SHOULD COVER YOUR THOUGHTS UP BETTER THEN!


I CAN'T HELP BUT READ THEM WHEN YOU LEAVE THEM LYING AROUND EVERYWHERE!
YOU EVER HEAR THE WORD "PRIVACY"?! DRAGONS ARE SO STUPID!
WHAT?! YOU'RE A RACIST! YOU DISPARAGED A WHOLE SPECIES JUST NOW!
FINE! DRAGONS ARE GREAT! IT'S JUST YOU THAT'S DUMB!
WE CAN'T STAND EACH OTHER, BUT I HAVE A FEELING...
...THAT WE'LL CONTINUE TO TRAVEL TOGETHER FOR A WHILE, UNTIL WE BOTH FIND WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR.
THE 11TH CAT, THE END.



(BONUS TRACK)

FINALLY! IT'S OVER!!
그...ooo
...BUT 그건
THERE'S 너무
A PROBLEM.
문제가
SINCE WE ANNOUNCED WE'D TAKE READER REQUESTS IN THE LAST VOLUME, A BUNCH OF YOU HAVE E-MAILED US.
BUT...
HOW CAN I SORT THROUGH IT ALL?
DARN!
TWITCH
*FILLED WITH SPAM MAIL


HERE'S SOMEONE WHO REQUESTED A PICTURE OF NOMI AND THE SWORD MASTER OF BLACK IRON AS A COUPLE ...
SHOULD WE DO IT?
THEN HOW ABOUT NOMI AND RIKA?
NO WAY! NEVER!!
DON'T YOU THINK YOU'VE USED ME ENOUGH?
LOUIS AND THE DARK PRINCE BATTLING...THAT SOUNDS TOO HARD. THE AUNTS AND THE DARK PRINCE...THAT'S A BIT TOO. *COUGH*
WELL, IT'S MY BOOK. I CAN IGNORE A REQUEST IF I DON'T LIKE IT.
WHY DOES IT HAVE TO BE ME?
MANY OF YOU REQUESTED A HUMANIZED VERSION OF SIERRA. WE SEND YOU SIERRA'S LOVE INSTEAD. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO CAPTURE SIERRA'S BEAUTY IN HUMAN FORM.
SO, IT CAME DOWN TO A PICTURE OF THE WHITE DRAGON AND THE VILLAGE BOY IN LOVE...
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR READING THE 11TH CAT!!
WE'LL SEE YOU NEXT TIME!